This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

B 1,221,195

WENLEY
LIBRARY

A HISTORIC VIEW OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

See Sinking in [illegible] Mal. Stones

[illegible]

A HISTORIC VIEW

OF THE

NEW TESTAMENT

THE JOWETT LECTURES DELIVERED AT THE
PASSMORE EDWARDS SETTLEMENT
IN LONDON, 1901

BY

PERCY GARDNER, LITT.D.

"It has to be considered whether the intellectual forms under which Christianity has been described may not be in a state of transition and resolution, in this respect contrasting with the never-changing truth of the Christian life."

"Before we can make the Old and New Testaments a real part of education, we must read them, not by the help of custom and tradition, in the spirit of apology or controversy, but in accordance with the ordinary laws of human knowledge." BENJAMIN JOWETT.

LONDON
ADAM AND CHARLES BLACK
1901

5-27-38

PREFACE

FOUR years ago the Council of the Passmore Edwards Settlement in London founded a lectureship in memory of the late master of Balliol College, Benjamin Jowett, for the promotion of "the study of the Bible and the history of religion, in the light of the best available results of criticism and research." The present set of lectures is the third delivered on the Jowett Foundation; the previous lecturers being Professor Charles of Dublin and Professor Adam Smith of Glasgow.

The quotations on the title-page are sufficient proof that the method and the objects of the lectures here published would have commended themselves to Mr. Jowett.

These lectures are printed as they were delivered, with a few slight alterations and expansions. Since I wrote them I have read Professor Harnack's *Wesen des Christenthums* (*What is Christianity?*) It is to me a great satisfaction to find that my historical views in most cases closely agree with those of so eminent a historian—notably my views as to the miraculous element in the life of Jesus,

the origin of the Fourth Gospel, and the relation of Greek to Hebrew elements in the early Church. Where I most completely differ from Professor Harnack is in the view of inspiration.

It is obvious that in eight lectures it is possible only to give a slight outline of so vast a subject as the origin of the New Testament. Most of the positions here taken are supported at greater length in my *Exploratio Evangelica* (1899), to which work I must needs refer readers who find the exposition now placed before them too slight.

PERCY GARDNER.

OXFORD, *August* 1901.

CONTENTS

LECTURE I

Historic Methods and Christian Documents

Some preliminary discussion of method is necessary: that which we shall adopt is the method of historic science, 1.—Science is *ordered knowledge*, 4.—Scientific method as applied to history consists mainly in three things: (1) rigorous criticism of ancient authorities, 5; (2) the comparison with existing fact whenever possible, whence arises the comparative method in historic investigations, 7; (3) the acceptance of evolution. But in history the theory of evolution cannot be so strictly applied as in biology, nor is law so rigid because of the disturbing force of human personality, and the Divine power which works through it, 12.—Historic science destructive of many existing beliefs, such as those of a physically miraculous origin of Christianity and the infallibility of the Bible, 16.—It tells in different ways, but with equal stress, against the doctrines of the Roman and the Reformed Churches; but the latter are more flexible, 19.—The Reformed Churches will be obliged to trust to their citadel of Christian experience, and reconsider their views of Christian origins, 21.—The task of these lectures is not merely destructive but constructive, 28.—The first step is to lay down a psychologic view as to the rise and intellectual embodiments of religion, after which we will proceed to consider the facts of the Christian origin in a broad historic fashion, not in the way of special or textual criticism, 29.—We shall find in sum that the writings of the New Testament are based upon Christian experience, but often debased by an admixture of false theory. Recent work on historic lines in Germany, France, and England, 32.

LECTURE II

Revelation and its Embodiments

Preliminary necessity of sketching the psychology of religion, 35.—Modern observation shows the predominance in human nature of will and the active powers over thought. Quotation from W. James, 37.—The world also is the manifestation of an active Power, revealed in nature on one side, and personality on the other. The respective functions of ethics and of religion, 40.—The history of religion is the history of the gradual revelation to man of the Divine will, which appears in history as a series of inner impulses working through individuals or societies, and taking outward embodiment in ritual, organisation, and thought, 44. —It is with intellectual embodiments that these lectures deal. Of these embodiments the most primitive is the myth, which later gives way to parable, 51.—In relation to time past, Divine impulses take shape in the writing of history, not actual but ideal, 53.—In relation to time future, they appear in prophecy, which is no mere soothsaying, but which sees the future in the existent, 57.—In relation to time present, they appear either in parable, or in doctrine, which latter being adapted to a given intellectual atmosphere, soon becomes unsuited to its surroundings, 61.—To every age its own embodiment of the Divine ideas seems final; but in fact the outward form passes away, and the spirit only survives, 65.

LECTURE III

The Historic Founder of Christianity

Christianity cannot be divorced from history; but all religious history is full of subjectivity, 70.—Nor does the inspiration of writers guarantee the accuracy of their knowledge either of nature or of events, 72.—The materials for an objective life of Jesus do not exist. Rhys Davids on Buddhist, and Goldziher on Mohammedan origins, 75.—Since the teaching of Jesus as given in the Gospels is far more authentic than the events they record, we begin not with Mark, but with Matthew and Luke, 78.—The most authentic of our documents is the Lord's Prayer, and this gives the key to the teaching of Jesus, dwelling specially on the doing of God's will in the individual life and in the world, 80.—The idea of individual devotion arises out of the Pharisaic religiosity;

that of the righteous society out of the Jewish expectation of a kingdom of God. In like manner the Jewish expectation of a Messiah was transformed, 84.—God's will as revealed in the laws of nature and to the conscience, 86.—Here is indeed the essence of all religion: in Christianity it is combined with the principle of inwardness, and set in an atmosphere of emotion, 88.—Love to one's neighbour is by Jesus subordinated to love to God, 91.—This last is the principle of His religion, and all positive teaching subordinate to it: such teaching is throughout in the relative key, often expressed in parables, sometimes in direct rules of conduct, 94.—In the setting of it, the temporary and material scarcely exists; doctrine, ritual, and organisation are wanting, 95.—As to the person of Jesus, apart from His teaching, we have no sufficient evidence for objective views: the views of sacred writers and of the Church were formed on a basis of experience, and are not historically valid, 99.

LECTURE IV

THE MESSIAH OF THE SYNOPTISTS

Reasons for writing the Gospels may be gathered from *Acts*, 103.—There were in the early Church two schools, the narrower or more Judaic, and the broader, the extremes being James and Paul, 106.—The ideas of the Founder were expressed by both schools, by the narrower in history and prophecy, by the broader mainly in doctrine: from the Jewish school come the three Gospels and the *Apocalypse*, from the broader school the Fourth Gospel, Pauline Epistles, etc., 107.—The two great thoughts of the Apostles in relation to their master: (1) His place in the historic plan of God, and (2) His ascendancy over men, were worked out in controversy with the Jews, and limited by local and temporal conditions, 109.—The first of these conditions was Messianic prophecy, to which the Founder's life had to conform, 112.—Examples of various ways of proceeding, adapting prophecy to suit facts of the life, and adapting facts of the life to suit prophecy, 119.—The feeling which underlies this process, the belief in an evolution of religion, and continuity between Jewish and Christian revelation is true, and valid always, 124.—The belief in the second coming: Did it arise out of statements of the Founder or from the adoption of Jewish Eschatology? So far as we can discern, it seems to come from the latter source, 127. —Jesus seems to have held the view that prophecy consists in deeper observation of fact, and not the apocalyptic views of the early Christians, 129.—The *Apocalypse*. In the main a Jewish work, with a thin veneer of Christianity, 137.

LECTURE V

THE SYNOPTISTS AND MIRACLE

A second tendency of the Synoptists was to place their Master's life in a setting of wonders: this in part a survival of animistic views of the world, 139.—We must distinguish mere wonders of healing from miracle proper, 141.—It appears (1) that Jesus wrought cures by faith-healing, (2) that he attributed disease to diabolic agency, 142.—But as regards miracles proper, we observe (1) All nations, Greeks, Persians, Indians, Arabs, have attributed such to great leaders, dead or living; the same tendency is conspicuous in the mediaeval Church, 145.—(2) In the case of Jesus, the number of miracles attributed to Him is very small, and He seems to have repudiated miraculous powers, 155.—The evidence produced for miracles proper is insufficient, 158.—Examples in which we see clearly the origin of such stories. Slight importance attached to miracles by Clement and others, 159.—More important in the history of Christianity than miracles wrought by Jesus is the miraculous setting of His birth and death, 161.—The supernatural birth narrated in a not-consistent fashion in the Gospels, and an earlier view seems to be that of adoption at Baptism, 163.—The resurrection of the body not supported by adequate testimony, 165.—Attitude of some modern writers, 168. We must note that under the imperfect setting of the Gospels lie two great Christian ideas: under the use of prophecy the idea that Christ was born from the beginning of the world; under the belief in miracle, the predominance of the spiritual over the material, 171.

LECTURE VI

THE LOGOS DOCTRINE OF THE FOURTH EVANGELIST

We have next to speak of the rendering of the Christian ideas in the broader school, first by the Fourth Evangelist, then by Paul, though in point of time Paul comes first, 173—Evangelist and Apostle are alike in that they interpret the Founder in the light of some of the fundamental religious ideas preserved in the mystic religions of the Hellenistic world, 174.—Authorship of the Fourth Gospel belongs to the second generation of Christians, to whom Christ was an experience rather than a memory.

It shows (1) correct traditions as to some events of the life of Jesus; (2) dominated by an intense feeling of His exalted nature, 181.—The writer, as is proved by his style, clearly composes speeches for his Master, 185. —Examples, 186.—He is not free from some of the limitations of the Synoptists, 194.—There are also weaknesses in his philosophic views, which are essentially Platonic, and tend to place knowledge above a virtuous will, but this perversion is superficial, 196.—He also naturally regards Jesus Christ as agent in the creation: a view for which in modern times we substitute a teleological one, 201.—In spite of these defects, the writer is an admirable theologian, and baptized into Christ some of the profoundest beliefs of universal religion, 204.—To blame the Evangelists for conforming to the literary habits of their age is absurd.

LECTURE VII

THE CHRISTIANITY OF ST. PAUL

Paul, the chief source of Christian doctrine, 208.—His vividness and human nature, 210.—We must judge of him from his Epistles rather than from *Acts*, 211.—His knowledge of the life of Jesus very imperfect: his own experience far more interesting to him, 212.—What then was his relation to the Founder? It was a continuity of life, and the spirit of Jesus Christ dominated him, 215—Paul's doctrine not a thought-out system, but an expression in intellectual terms of an experience lighted up by flashes of inspiration, 216.—His weakness lay in his Rabbinical use of the Old Testament, and in the imperfection of his scientific outlook, which tells greatly in the formation of doctrine, 220.—Examples: the spiritual body, the origin of evil, the second coming, 222.—Paul's Christology set forth in his own words, 227.—He was a born missionary and organiser; and all his doctrines, such as those of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, of the Church, of justification, had to do with the actual life of the Christian society. They were worked out in conflict, first in the heart of Paul himself, then in the Church, 230.—Their close connexion with fact has made them long-lived; they are no speculative construction, 233.—The *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 234.—The unknown writer has lighted on a vein of gold in the very ancient custom of propitiatory sacrifice, which he baptises into Christianity, 235—To him also is due the formulation of the doctrine of Jesus Christ as mediator, 236.

LECTURE VIII

SUMMARY AND INFERENCES

Summary of the preceding lectures, 241.—Their great lesson is the distinction between underlying reality and temporary expression, 242. But every age must clothe the lasting truth in some forms, and we must see if our argument has given us any suggestions as to the kind of expression suited to the present age, 250.—Outline of the recent history of religious thought in Germany, 251.—It starts from the Kantian philosophy. Schleiermacher; the school of Ritschl; Lipsius, 253. In England there have been great religious writers and movements, but they have been poor on the side of systematic thought, 259.—Three points are suggested as to religious thought in our days: (1) the history of the Church must be treated as a development, and an inspired development, but we must take the *whole* history of the *whole* Church, 262; (2) the physiological view of the will, and the relativity of knowledge, must have far-reaching effects on the formulation of doctrine, especially doctrine as to the person of the Founder, 265; (3) the doctrine of the Kingdom of God appeals with special force to an age which begins to regard society as an organism, 270.

9

LECTURE I

HISTORIC METHOD AND CHRISTIAN DOCUMENTS

To every one who has passed through a serious schooling in the study of ancient history, it must needs come home that in that province of history which belongs to early Christianity all the methods of historic research are commonly set at naught and its principles daily violated. There is a general consensus among the mass of theologians that when Christian history and doctrine are concerned the ordinary canons of evidence lose their applicability,—that the eyes must be accustomed to a non-natural light, and look at the literature and the history of the early Church as if it were something that stood quite by itself, and out of relation to all else going on in the world.

It is the purpose of the present lectures to oppose this tendency,—to try to show the events of early Christian history as phenomena among phenomena—important, venerable, inspired, yet not standing outside the range of historic method. In taking this view, though I am opposing the ordinary

tendencies of English theology, I am not of course in any way taking a new departure. Many religious historians and teachers, in England and in other countries, have travelled on the road which we are to pursue,—some with rapid and confident steps, some hesitating, fearing, constantly looking backward. In England we have been somewhat late in taking this road. One of the earliest to try it was the man in whose honour these lectures were founded, Benjamin Jowett. "Interpret the Scripture," he wrote, "like any other book. There are many respects in which Scripture is unlike any other book; these will appear in the results of such an interpretation." This principle he fully recognised, if in acting on it he was in great measure hampered by a certain distrust of historic research, which made him timid. He handed on the task to a man of greater courage and greater literary skill, Matthew Arnold, whose admirable gift of style has perhaps done more than anything else to make the general results of historic criticism of the New Testament familiar to the educated readers of England and America. Arnold was indeed deficient, as he often playfully confessed, in the matter of system and philosophic basis. Yet he is the wise guide who, more than any great English writer, has seen in true perspective the way to the celestial country. He has shown the path which we must follow if we would win back our Bible, if we would remove the mists of convention and unreality which hide from

us the pure forms of the living Church, and the essential character of undying religion.

Since I claim to represent a method, there lies before me a duty which cannot be avoided. We must not at once approach the subject of these lectures, but must spend some time in surveying the ground, in making clear our purpose, in calculating our resources. I am obliged to utter a preliminary discourse on method. A discourse on method! — the phrase has a tedious sound. But we must remember how the history of modern philosophy opens with a discourse on method by Descartes, and that a dissertation on method is one of the most suggestive of the works of Coleridge. However it has come about, it seems that in our day none of the great nations of the world is so wanting in exact method as our own. It was by superiority in practical methods that not very long ago we dominated the commerce of the world. But other nations have moved faster than we have, and now it is by superior method that Germans and Americans are making inroads on our foreign trade. It is by scientific method that the universities of the Continent surpass those of England in the production of learned work. Let me then try to bring method into the part of knowledge with which I am to deal in these lectures.

The method which I intend to pursue is that of historic science. But I must not move too fast: explanation is needed. To an English ear the very phrase "historic science" is unfamiliar, per-

haps paradoxical. Among us, unfortunately, the word science has drifted away from its reasonable and wider sense. Almost always when we speak of science we mean the knowledge of the material world—chemistry, physics, biology. But science is but the Latin word for knowledge; it can mean only knowledge ranged and ordered and made methodic, whether it be knowledge of things material, or of man, of documents, or of society. All knowledge gained by observation and experiment, when we have properly digested and ordered it, becomes part of science. Archæology, philology, psychology, economics, sociology, are all branches of science, quite as much as are chemistry and physiology. This is, indeed, fully recognised in the universities and academies of the Continent. Foreign academies of science are usually divided into two branches, of which one deals with the physical and biologic sciences, the other with the sciences of which man is the subject, the historic and psychologic sciences.

The question is not merely one of the use of words, but of logic and method. Science is ordered knowledge. Knowledge which is not ranged and ordered, however extensive it may be, is not science. A man may hold in his head the contents of a whole library, and yet know nothing scientifically. And however carefully ranged and ordered a man's views may be, they do not make science unless they are really known; that is to say, not taken from authority

or tradition, but based on observation or evidence. The great schoolmen, though most methodic in their metaphysical systems, were not scientific, because they did not distinguish what is known from what is not in fact known. Theologians who build systems on texts of the Bible reach no scientific result, however methodic be their procedure, for their basis is not knowledge but authority.

This is perhaps scarcely the place or the time for a logical and detailed inquiry into the change which has come over historic studies during the century which has just passed away. It is a change as great and as momentous as has taken place in the sciences which deal with nature. And there can be no question that it is the rapid and startling progress taking place in the physical sciences which has reacted upon and stimulated those which deal with man. I must content myself with trying to make clear three ways of thought which have passed from physical into historic studies. These are: first, criticism of authorities; second, reverence for observed fact; and third, acceptance of evolution. In regard to the third of these changes in our historic outlook, I must add a word of caution; for it is undoubtedly possible to follow evolutionary methods too crudely in the human domain, and such rashness leads to results which may be deplorable.

I

On the first point, the criticism and consequent shrinking of literary authorities, it is needless to

say much; for no one can doubt that, whether for good or for evil, it is one of the most notable signs in the intellectual world. An age which has learned the inadequacy of the opinions of great men of past times in regard to the facts of the visible world, is quite ready—often too ready—to distrust the wisdom of bygone ages in all things. As the wise author of *Natural Religion* has observed, in our day the commentator has quite lost the rank which he used to hold, because we are apt to doubt whether ancient books are worthy of careful comment.

But here at once becomes clear a great difference, in regard to their use of writers of past times, between the sciences of nature and experiment and those which deal with history. When we can observe and test for ourselves, we have the less need to rely upon statements contained in books. But in history the testimony of ancient writers is absolutely necessary: we cannot usually bring past events to the test of sense—we can only discover what is told us about them. Does not the shrinking of authority, then, tend rather to depress historic studies in comparison with those which deal with things which can be seen and felt, than to alter historic methods?

This is undoubtedly one aspect of the matter. Some scholars who have divided their attention between the study of nature on one side and that of history on the other, have declared that in nature they have found only God's truth, and in history only man's lies. Charles Kingsley even gave up,

for some such reason, his professorship of history at Cambridge. But it is by no means necessary to follow so far a natural feeling. If historic results are more vague and less trustworthy than those attained in chemistry or physics, yet man is a more interesting object of study than are gases and electricity, and he cannot be content to stand as a parvenu without a known past in the great world of which he is master. It is quite clear that history cannot be given over as a prey to mere scepticism.

II

We can rescue history from any such risk by insisting on a distinction. In history, as in physical science, we must try to supplement the waning power of authority by an appeal to fact. And fact, real fact, in history is not only the events of the past, as to which we can seldom reach complete certainty. Nor are the accounts which historians give us of the events of their own times by any means always fact, if by fact we mean what really took place in this world of ours. But there is a sense in which every document is a fact. There it stands, visible and readable: it is a reality which we cannot get rid of, but which we have to explain. And the accounts which it contains of past events are also all fact, in the sense that they were by the historian accepted, and that they became part of his mental furniture. The simplest way of accounting for

them is that they are transcripts from realities; but that is by no means the only way of accounting for them. There are many other possibilities; and in judging of other possibilities we have to consider the author's means of knowledge, his character, the mental atmosphere by which he was surrounded, the literary habits of the time, and many more such circumstances.

As an example we may take the account in Thucydides of the siege of Platæa. Grave doubts have been expressed by scholars whether that account is an accurate transcript of facts. Here the geography of Platæa, which can be studied on the spot, is an invaluable touchstone for the discernment between accuracy and inaccuracy in the writer. But, whatever be the end of this controversy, at any rate we have the fact that Thucydides, being a writer of such and such character and tendencies, and with such and such means for discovering the truth, thought that the siege of Platæa ran this course. In place of external fact of history, we have in the last resort psychological fact as to what was believed to have taken place. To pass from the psychologic to the external fact is precisely the task which modern historians find set before them, and which with very various degrees of success they attempt. Thus the psychologic element in history is rapidly growing in importance.

Perhaps this may be made clearer by a comparison drawn from astronomy, which is a science in some respects not unlike history, inasmuch as it

has to rely upon observation only, without experiment. By the help of reflector and telescope and photographic lens the astronomer gains direct knowledge of the position, the movements, and the aspect of the planets, and sometimes from considering those data is able to infer the existence and the locality of other planets which are as yet unobserved. Similarly the historian's knowledge of the mind of his author is direct; his inferences as to the events of which that author has written are indirect, and must be submitted to the severest critical tests before they can be accepted. Perhaps a new archæologic fact, like the renewed observation of the astronomer, may confirm the conjectured fact.

The untrained mind will judge of the truth of a tale by its plausibility, or by the moral it conveys; will accept it at once if it fits in with a prejudice, or reject it if it seems to be inconsistent with preconceived views of the world. It is just here that science comes in, teaching us that for judging of truth method and training are necessary; that we must cultivate the white light, the open mind; that self-suppression and self-control are the road to reasonable knowledge. We have to learn to accept on the evidence of monument or of document views which are distasteful to us, and to reject from the realm of fact many tales which we would gladly accept if our trained conscience would allow us to do so. And we further observe that this temper, so common in the modern world, was scarcely

to be found anywhere among the nations of antiquity.

When we turn for a basis of history to reality, to fact, there is one kind of fact which is at once conspicuous. The physical features of the lands where the events of past history took place still remain. Many of the monuments which were the record or the result of those events—walls, palaces, temples—remain. In our museums are abundant spoils—sculpture, inscriptions, coins—which bear direct and undeniable witness to the past. Archæology furnishes an admirable and an uncorrupt test for the verifying of past history. Unfortunately it does not go so far as we could wish, and the events which one can bring to this test are usually rather outward and visible circumstances than mental and moral changes. But the spirit produced by the study of archæology goes far beyond the detached fact. It teaches one to look in the present for the clue to the past—to seek earnestly for a ground of certainty among uncertainties. It trains the mind to judge of degrees of evidence, and to be content with indecision when decisive evidence is not to be found. In a word it carries further and applies the lesson taught by the physical sciences.

I am speaking here primarily of ancient history, with which alone in these lectures I am concerned. In the case of modern history, geography still retains its importance, but archæology takes a subordinate place. Documents, such as treaties, charters, and the like, take the place which inscrip-

tions and monuments take in respect to ancient history, and are even more effectual. But modern history is of course outside our subject.

When archæology reaches the limit imposed on it by necessity, it passes on the torch to other branches of human science, anthropology, mythography, the study of institutions, of literature, of economics, and trade. These branches of science have in our days undergone a vast development. Their methods have been continually improved, their principles made clearer and clearer. Of course the precise facts of history in the past can seldom be recovered with finality. But we are agreed as to the kinds of evidence to be sought, and the value which attaches to each. We learn to set aside, as far as may be, personal and racial prejudices in estimating evidence. We try to judge the past in the light of present experience, watching in their actual working the forces of human nature which have determined the history of nations.

Thus arises the comparative method. When we come to a gap in past history, or to a part of it which has been blurred by too vivid emotion, and obscured by practical purpose, we look about us to find in the present world or in the better recorded phases of the past some similar and parallel group of phenomena. We recover the key to the hieroglyphics of Egypt in modern Coptic; we compare the mythology of Greece with that of New Zealand; the ancestor-worship of the early Aryans becomes more intelligible to us when we observe the process

of deification of mortals going on in India; many phases of the origin of religions are explained by the striking phenomena of the worship of the Báb, which first arose in Persia in 1844, and has wonderfully developed since the execution of its founder. The comparative method assumes that events in the human world do not happen at random, but are subject to law, though historic law is far less hard and rigid than that observable in the realm of nature.

III

The third way of thinking, which has spread from physical into historic studies, is the acceptance of evolution, the belief in continuity. In history, as in biology, every new development arises out of something existing, and runs a more or less definite course. There are not in history, as there are not in the physical progress of the world, veritable cataclysms, when the regular laws of the world are suspended, and the wheels of change turned backward. Belief in evolution runs as a red thread through almost all modern works on history.

Yet in adopting the comparative method in history and in transferring the theory of evolution from the biological to the historic sciences, we must proceed with caution, since we move with danger. Nothing has been more adverse to the progress of true science than the too hasty transfer of methods and views from lower and simpler to higher and

more complicated fields of investigation. The too hasty assumption that in history there is evolution and unvaried law has led many of the most philosophic and thorough workers in the historic field into error. The truth is that in some parts of history, in some of the forms of activity of collective man, we may trace continuity far more readily than in others. In political institutions, in the succession of styles in a living art, and particularly in the development of intellectual conditions, we may trace gradual evolution from age to age, sometimes indeed thwarted, interrupted, and distorted, yet on the whole as a process. Thus great thinkers like Hegel and Comte have thrown much light on history by regarding it as a development of thought. But they have also, as I think, largely failed because they have looked on man only as an intelligent being rather than as will and force. Here we find an aspect of man which does not give much opening to theories of evolution. There is in fact a great force in history which is not, so far as we can judge, evolutional, and the law of which is very hard to trace,—the force of personality and character. We move in a settled medium—human surroundings change but slowly and follow ascertainable law; but we ourselves, who move amid these surroundings,—we, in the ultimate recesses of our personalities, are not originated by them. Every human soul is in some degree a new creation, an incalculable force, coming we know not whence, but acting with vigour on its surroundings,—a centre about which all things

revolve. The historians who are too deeply impressed by the truth of evolution in history have a way of making little of personality, will, character. History to them loses its light and shade, and takes a dull grey hue. They see the wood but not the trees. And their one-sidedness calls forth a protest in the writings of those historians whom one may call the personal or picturesque school, to whom the course of history seems in the main a record of the doings and sayings of great men, of heroes who stride forth among the gazing crowds of pygmies, and control the future by the innate force that is in them. In such guise did history present itself to the mind of Thomas Carlyle.

It is as easy to exaggerate the influence of personality in history as it is to minimise it. The truth as usual lies between the extremes. And the matter can scarcely be said to be wrapped in mystery, since we, every one of us, all our lives have been watching the working of character in the world. Every tragedy has for its scope the struggle of man against circumstance. Every novel which is a study of character shows that character developing and striving, pressing against the barriers of circumstance and the limits of destiny. Man is neither the slave of his surroundings nor their absolute master. And therefore history, which is the sum of human lives, does not move like the forces of nature by fixed law, and yet its course is mapped out within certain limits. It is no phantasmagoria, but an ordered growth, which can be the

subject, not of an exact science, but yet of a reasonable and methodic investigation.

But further, the effect of personalities in history is not merely the sum of their conscious workings. The roots of personality stretch far beneath consciousness into the deep common life of the universe, —the power not ourselves which surrounds us on all sides.

Those who study the history of the past, or who watch the course of events in the present, are likely less and less to believe in the power of foresight in statesmen and rulers. The wisest sees but a little way into the future, and the strongest is seldom able to dominate for long the drift of affairs by any conscious purpose. But there is a wisdom which does not come of conscious thought, and there are impulses of which a man only imperfectly sees the drift, which work through personalities into the course of history, and turn its stream hither and thither. Thus the personal element, whether working in conscious or in unconscious ways, can never be neglected when we deal with the past or look into the world around us. Man moulds circumstance, and in turn is moulded by it; and the constant clash between the inward and the outward, man and the environment, and the higher powers which work through each, determines the path which each generation has to tread towards a distant and unseen goal.

IV

I have now sufficiently taxed your patience with the discussion of method. We have next to see how the changes which have come over our conception of history bear upon the religious beliefs which we have inherited from our fathers. Upon the actual facts of the religious life they have no direct bearing. Religion is at bottom a condition of heart and will—a constantly maintained relation towards a higher spiritual Power. And this religion —the religion of experience and of conduct—is not immediately dependent upon our historic outlook. It is a matter, not of inference, not of learned research, but of daily life and habit of soul. We need have but little fear that any views as to historic methods can invalidate our religious, our Christian experience. They have no power to destroy facts; they can only make invalid certain inferences from experience. The great main truths of personal religion seem to me to stand before us like white mountain ranges, which we may measure and geologically examine, but which we cannot dream of moving.

But yet, since man is a reasoning and reasonable creature, it is nevertheless of importance, of very high importance, that our views as to religion, as to the origin and grounds of our faith, should be at one together—should be capable of being put in logical and defensible form, and set on terms with the rest

of our daily thought. Here we begin to reach our difficulties and our problems.

In the last generation the great difficulty lay in finding a way of reconciling religious tradition and theory with the rapidly advancing knowledge of the physical world. We have heard much of the battles waged by theologians against men of science on such questions as whether the world came into being in six days, or whether the sun really stood still at the bidding of Joshua. Such questions as these greatly moved our fathers, but us they no longer move. For the educated theologians of our day no longer suppose that they will be allowed a hearing when the great questions of astronomy, of geology, or of biology, are discussed. And the most pious scientific men of our day would not dream of warping the views which they gather from observation and experiment in order to suit the exigencies of a religious creed.

Physical science having made its way, and established its right to govern its own affairs, historic science next comes forward with a like claim. Let us then turn to what is the real subject of the present lecture, and the necessary introduction to those which are to follow; let us consider in what ways the changed intellectual atmosphere affects the basis of the Christian religion, so far as that basis is historical. It can scarcely be doubted that the effects produced by a complete reorganisation of the historic sciences on the existing fabric of Christian belief must be

immense. At the present moment the beliefs of the great majority of professed Christians grew up in, and are adapted to, a different intellectual atmosphere from that which is beginning to blow upon us. For the last three hundred years the Christian world has been divided into two great camps, the Catholic and the Reformed. Among Catholics the received and authoritative belief has been that Christianity had its birth in a series of miraculous events which made an absolute breach between what went before and what came after, a veritable cataclysm, and that from the very beginning down to our own days the course of Christianity has been *sui generis*, a series of miracles, not merely moral miracles, but miracles actually physical. And for three hundred years the Reformed Churches, though among them there has been no such uniformity of belief as authority has imposed on the Catholics, have yet been in the main pervaded by beliefs no less cataclysmic. They too have held very generally that miracles lie at the threshold of Christian history. And to a book they have almost universally accorded an origin absolutely different from that of all other books: they have accepted the direct inspiration, and something like the infallibility, of the Bible as a necessary tenet.

Thus it is certain that many of the views commonly held by Christians are wholly inconsistent with a comparative and continuous view of history. The inspiration of the Bible is supposed to be of

such a kind that we must not apply to its narratives and epistles the ordinary canons of literary criticism. Most Christians think that the coming into the world of the Founder of Christianity was an event so unique as to account for any number of breaches of the observed laws of nature. They believe the history of the Christian Church to have been so directly controlled from above, that it cannot be set parallel to the history of any merely human institution. Many of them believe that miracles — not moral merely, but physical — are occurring every day among the faithful; and that there exists a power of performing such miracles which is strictly limited to those who have partaken of a certain consecration. Opinions and beliefs such as these must either be kept in a different chamber of the mind from modern educated thought, or else they will be perpetually colliding with it and stultifying it.

It is a view which has been held by many, that the spread of evolutionary ideas into the study of history tends greatly to the strengthening of the Roman Catholic position in comparison with that of the Reformed Churches. The Roman Church can show a continued history and a continued development of organisation of liturgy and of doctrine. She maintains that the miraculous gifts and the infallibility which belonged to the church of the Apostles belong still to her communion,—that Rome has maintained almost from the first one line of policy and one line of belief.

The Reformed Churches, on the other hand, attribute to the days of the Apostles miraculous powers in deed and thought which did not come down lower. They have broken away from the line of gradual development, on the ground that it was tending in the direction of degradation and decay, and have tried to revert to an ancient type known to us only from historical works. Some of the ablest of recent English Catholics, such as Wiseman and Newman, have been strongly impressed by such facts, and their recognition probably lies at the root of the changed attitude towards the Church of Rome usually held by men of high talent and education. Mr. Mallock, in an acute work recently published, developed this view.

Undoubtedly it has some grounds; and it is very probable that if the Roman system had shown more intellectual flexibility, more power of adapting itself to the ways of modern thought, it might have so strongly used this advantage of historic attitude as to reconquer much of the ground it had lost in the last three centuries in Germany and England. But the opportunity has been missed. The rulers of the Roman Church have obstinately held their traditional ground, and without hesitation opposed almost every tendency of modern thought, with the result that they now seem only to have the advantage of being thoroughly consistent in maintaining an impossible position. Their evolution, instead of mounting from stage to stage, has pursued a vicious circle within fixed limits which they dare

not pass. They cannot bend; and the result will almost certainly be that sooner or later they will fall with a crash.

The Reformed Churches, in spite of the enormous disadvantages under which they suffer, have been saved by their superior flexibility. They have never replied with a *non possumus* to the demands of science and history. They have tried to find working compromises, and usually they have succeeded. For example, they have condoned the inroads of science on the biblical account of creation; but historic science is commonly warned off the ground occupied by the New Testament. Yet to all the Reformed theology compromise has now become a great source of weakness. It is natural to hold that Christianity had a miraculous origin, if one also maintains that miracles still mark its course. It is reasonable to think that the words attributed to Jesus Christ and His Apostles are infallible, if infallibility still resides in the Church which He founded. But the more rigid the line drawn between the life of the Founder —or shall we say of the Founder and His Apostles? —and the subsequent ages of the Church, the harder becomes the maintenance of a strong intellectual position.

In my opinion the only hope of building again the shaken framework of the Reformed theology lies in accepting a different view of history. Protestantism possesses an inexpugnable central fortress in its conviction, founded upon experience,

that the communion between man and his Maker is open to every human soul, apart from all question of organisation and tradition. And having this unfailing refuge, the Reformed Churches can dare to treat history with freer hand, and to follow wherever evidence and science may lead. Romanist advocates are fond of insisting on the saying of St. Alphonso, that in matters vital to salvation one cannot act on an opinion which is uncertain. But every one used to the consideration of historic questions knows how uncertain is the structure of fact, supposed to be historic, which the Roman Church considers the indispensable basis of her creed. On the other hand, there can be no basis of opinion so certain as experience, enlarged by an examination of the testimony of others, and supported by a broad study of history.

St. Alphonso after all is right. To the modern spirit, as I think, and certainly to me personally, no maxim could appeal with greater force than this, that religious beliefs are too important, too serious in their consequences in life and death, to be accepted on merely probable evidence. When doctrine is based on historic record, and when for proof of it we are referred to writings of doubtful authorship, coming down to us out of the mist of ages, and bearing obvious signs of human weakness and ignorance, we cannot help shrinking in doubt and in terror. Is it on such evidence as this that we are to risk the well-being of our souls? Can we implicitly trust to such guides amid the dangers

and the storms of practical life? It seems impossible. When troubles, and the doubts which troubles bring, press us hard, we must have some safer anchorage for our souls,—we must be able to feel that the grounds of our faith are firmly set, beyond the reach of historic doubt. We must be able to say that we know our belief to be true, if not with white intellectual conviction, then with a moral certainty which goes to the bottom of our whole active nature, and without which life would for us utterly lose its meaning.

For this reason there seem to me grave objections to the view of the historic origins of Christianity often taken by English Churchmen. Many such will say, "We accept the long-received views as to the birth of the Founder, His miracles and the like, as the basis of our Christian belief: if you can disprove these views we are ready to listen, but we will not surrender them on merely probable evidence." Now in ancient history scarcely anything can be rigorously proved; everything rests on a comparison of probabilities. These Churchmen set us an impossible task. But we may fairly reply, Is it thus that you hold your creed? Are you willing to surrender its whole basis, if at any time historic evidence of a convincing kind is brought against it? A creed so held, as it were on sufferance, is surely a poor foundation for the religious life. Not in this tentative fashion did Christians of past days believe, when they gave up their worldy possessions or went cheerfully to the

stake rather than deny their faith. They knew in whom they had believed: the basis of their confidence was not historic probability, but the experience of a life in which they had acted on certain beliefs and found them worthy of trust.

However this be, we can only carry out our task under the possible conditions. To demand of any historian that he shall prove or disprove the events of ancient history is to require more than he can possibly perform. He can only hope to make one view seem more probable than another. Thus it is useless to require us to take in regard to the history of Christian origins quite a different course from that which is universally allowed to be right in the whole remaining field of ancient history. No reasonable man would profess historically to disprove the Christian miracles. But if we can show that they rest on no sufficient evidence, and further, that there was every probability that whether actual or not they would be reported, then we do according to the canons of history dismiss them from objective existence.

A parallel position to that which I have discussed used to be taken half a century ago by those who thought their faith imperilled by the acceptance of geologic views which conflicted with the first chapter of Genesis. They also called on the geologists for unanswerable proofs, and for a time at least such were not readily forthcoming. Thus great labour and learning were wasted on the hopeless task of "reconciling" Scripture and geology. The reason-

ing powers will not be put aside: they must have food, and if they cannot have the bread of science, of "ordered knowledge," they must put up with the sawdust of "reconciling" views. If once the path of intellectual wholeness and sincerity is abandoned, the eyes become darkened at mid-day.

No one could be more keenly alive than I am to the close limitations of man's faculties of knowledge, to the vastness of the unknown which bounds us on every side. And no one could be more ready than I am to allow that the will has its affirmations as well as the intellect. Much that is to the intellect indifferent or unmeaning may be to will and conscience a matter of life and death. The affirmations of the reason are cold and poor, until force and colour are imparted to them by the practical faculties; and these faculties often even venture into realms inaccessible to the slow and plodding feet of the understanding, and impose upon the man who would live as well as inquire an attitude and a course.

But between that which goes beyond intellect and that which conflicts with intellect we should draw the clearest and strongest of lines. To say, "I believe because I cannot know," is quite another thing from saying, "I believe although it is contrary to evidence and reason." And it is this latter attitude of mind, accepted by many out of motives of a truly religious kind, which is fatal to intellectual candour and honesty. Unless faith and intelligence have come to terms, their perpetual clashings will

make the life miserable, and weaken all its purposes. But if each, beside the realm which they possess in common, has a separate province, this produces no clashing, but tends to harmony.

If the field of history is given over to science, to the spirit of "ordered knowledge," it must be given wholly and without reserve. We cannot keep back a part of it, or say to the genius of inquiry, "Thus far shalt thou come but no farther." One of the greatest of recent historians, who was also a decided Churchman, has written,[1] "No spirit can be more directly opposed to any method of sound historical study than one which puts any writer, however illustrious, beyond the reach of that process of comparison and criticism which is the very life of all historical research."

Inconsistency and trouble commonly arise in the religious life from the same cause which in the world of biology and in the social world lies at the root of an immense deal of weakness and of suffering,—the survival of that which was adapted to the surroundings of the past, but is no longer suited to the conditions of the present. This is a truth which will very frequently come before us in the course of these lectures; and few religious laws seem to be of so wide and universal bearing. The main tenets or doctrines of Christianity, as it even now exists, were formulated at a time when the intellectual atmosphere and the social conditions were entirely different from what they are now. By

[1] Freeman, *Methods of Historical Study*, p. 216.

ecclesiastical authority they were fixed and imposed upon believers. The surrounding conditions having changed, these tenets appear to us in a perfectly different light from that in which they appeared to all men at their first appearing. Then they seemed perfectly natural and reasonable, in accordance with the facts of the world and with religious experience. They often made their way by their inherent reasonableness. But now they seem to us unreasonable, in contradiction to natural laws and to human nature. Yet we fear to reject them, because the odour of authority clings about them, and we dread the consequences of revolt. So we accept them, or fancy we accept them, as mysteries or paradoxes,—as views which we have to believe, although they shock our consciences and conflict with our experience. We do not see that they are merely husks out of which the grains have dropped, outworn garments unsuited to the activities or even the decencies of modern life.

And yet these comparisons, though from the strictly critical point of view they may be justifiable, do not altogether fit the facts. For belief is like an organism which grows slowly from age to age. And when a part of an organism becomes useless and a mere survival, even though its presence be an encumbrance and a danger, yet its removal must always be a painful and difficult operation. Nature in such cases proceeds slowly. When some part of a living body becomes useless and has lost its function, it is only by a slow process, continued

through many generations, that it becomes atrophied and diminishes, until its presence is hardly to be noted. That which nature does by slow and laborious process, the reason of man often enables him to do far more quickly. But reason cannot wholly do away with the pain and loss involved in the process. The decay of beliefs, even when they are to be superseded by better beliefs, must needs be a sad and dreary thing. Happy indeed are those in whose case the decaying foliage is pushed off by young growing buds of new belief, and not merely lopped off by the knife of criticism.

V

The task laid before me in these lectures would indeed be a sad one if I had nothing to offer but destructive criticism,—if my purpose were only to show that the historic views which commonly prevail among Christians as to the origin of their faith and the life of their Founder are such as cannot endure historic examination. Happily, my discourse will be of quite another cast, constructive as well as destructive—even, as I hope, more constructive than destructive. The first results of applying historic method to the documents of the Christian faith may seem chilling and sad; but if we follow up the method with courage and pertinacity,—perhaps I should rather say with the faith which believes that the laws of intelligence and the methods of science have a sanction as divine as piety itself,—then we

may perhaps reach more satisfactory results. In the long run science, like the spear of Achilles, will heal the wound which it has made. Seeing on all sides around us the wrecks of attempts to construct a safe basis for reasonable belief, we dare not be too sanguine; but at least the attempt is one well worthy of serious effort.

The remedy is not retrogression, which is impossible, nor mere conservatism, which is hopeless. The only safe path is that which leads onwards. The true method is to begin with the religious psychology of the individual, thence to proceed to the psychology of nations and of societies, and afterwards to consider religious history in the light thus acquired. To this order we must necessarily adhere; but in these lectures history is our main concern. Psychology, whether individual or social, can only be here treated in outline, as an introduction to what follows.

After our psychologic sketch, we shall proceed to consider certain historic problems in relation to the earliest accounts of Christianity which have come down to us. And I may perhaps here anticipate by saying that the views which I shall try to establish are two—(1) that alike the historic and doctrinal statements of the New Testament are based mainly on Christian experience, and (2) that in the formulation of this experience there is always an element of false theory. What we have to do is to discern between the true underlying fact and its defective outward expression.

The modern authorities for the early Christian history are very abundant and often excellent. In history no man can work by himself: he will find on all sides helpers and colleagues. In these days historical work is carried on as by a vast communistic society. No man can hope to study at first hand more than a small part of the vast field of history. However original his views, they must be founded mainly on the researches of others.

The broad historic task which lies before us is quite different from the minute and learned criticism of the text of the New Testament to which many theologians devote themselves, with very valuable results for the progress of biblical knowledge. Of their labours no one could hold a higher opinion than I. *Cuique in arte sua credendum.* Yet it is necessary here to insist upon the truth that studies of detail do not necessarily involve the power of looking at a whole in true perspective. We may allow that specialists are the best authorities as to the particular questions which they study, without allowing their authority in regard to questions which they do not make their business, to the solution of which they may be constitutionally little fitted. The fact that they are skilled in the uses of πρός and ἐπί, and know the tendencies of all the manuscripts from A to Z, makes them excellent judges in textual matters, but does not in itself carry them beyond the text to the circumstances which gave rise to the Gospels. And an intimate knowledge of geographic

and other facts concerning Palestine and Asia Minor does not in itself enable men to judge of the strange, yet by no means unparalleled, phenomena of the rise of a new religion.

As the minds of practical theologians tend to be warped by necessities of edification, so the outlook of specialists is frequently narrowed by a too rigid limitation to smaller questions in regard to the New Testament—questions of reading of version and of grammatical construction. Clearly these minuter studies have their value, are indeed necessary to the wholesome progress of biblical criticism. But it is seldom that they have any serious bearing on the broader historic questions. Discoveries of new documents, or of extant documents at an earlier stage, such discoveries as may well be made amid the papyri of Egypt,—these may indeed hereafter give us new and startling historic light. But a minute examination of our documents as they exist, when long and exclusively pursued, is apt to warp the mind into an exaggerated view of the importance of mere words. "Learning," wrote Jowett,[1] "obscures as well as illustrates; it heaps up chaff when there is no more wheat." "He who, in the present state of knowledge, will confine himself to the plain meanings of words and the study of their context, may know more of the original spirit and intention of the authors of the New Testament than all the controversial writers of former ages put together."

[1] *Essays and Dissertations*, pp. 10, 11.

VI.

For the most valuable authorities as to the early history of Christianity, as indeed in regard to every part of the domain of ancient history, we must turn to Germany and Holland. For learning, for philosophic breadth, for accurate and scientific method as applied to ancient history, the great writers of Germany stand first. Confining ourselves to recent writers on early Christian history, we may cite the works of Harnack, Schürer, and Weizsäcker, to which the literature of other countries scarcely offers a parallel. There is, however, a notable historic school in France, comprising the two Réville, the two Sabatiers, and others, which in logical method and in clearness of exposition goes even beyond the German mark. In England also admirable work has been done, rather by detached scholars than by a school. Two writers of the last generation, Bishop Lightfoot and Edwin Hatch, stand prominent,—the first for the accuracy of his great learning, the second for his vigorous grasp of true historic method. Even if we have to trust continental writers for guidance, there is no need to follow any of them slavishly. Every country has an intellectual character of its own, has different mental needs, and a different ideal. Hence the translations of the great books of Germany can have but a limited appreciation in England. They belong to the few, not to the many; and before they can reach the mind and

heart of Englishmen they must be not merely translated but transformed. We cannot use these palaces of thought as our own: we can but imitate them in native material, building houses less spacious and lofty, but adapted to our climate and our customs.

The greatest of English critics, Matthew Arnold, has declared that the notable force and virility of English literature is the fruit of a long and stirring national history. The converse with affairs has made us practical,—may indeed have made us too intolerant of logic and of theory. Yet the habit of measuring forces, of avoiding extremes, of judging schools in politics and in life by their practical efficacy, is in itself a fine quality. An Englishman always desires to melt down a theory, to discern what basis it has, and what it will lead to if accepted. He regards inconsistency as a smaller fault than pedantry. Above all he loves directness, simplicity, candour; loves these qualities more dearly than any people has ever loved them. Nothing estranges him more completely than even a suspicion of insincerity. And besides this strongly marked desire to see things as they are, we English have an immense advantage in the treatment of all religious history, in the high and continued development of the life of religion among us. We cannot, like some French writers, confuse religion with politics or sociology; nor, like some German writers, confuse religion with philosophy. It is the country of Wesley and of Newman and of Robertson, where in every town and village there are many who, how-

ever ill-educated or humble, have a wisdom and grasp in the things of the spirit which raises them above the level of ordinary sensuous existence.

I have tried to include in this opening lecture all that was necessary to clear our path. I have inflicted on you a discourse on method; I have lamented the unstable state among us of historic views of early Christianity; I have tried to meet some of the objections to our course which will most readily occur to the dissatisfied. The result, I hope, will be that we shall be left free for the regular accomplishment of our task. Henceforth I shall deal but little with controversy—controversy which is like the ploughing of the sea-shore, but will seek more fertile fields wherein the seeds of thought may have room to grow.

LECTURE II

REVELATION AND ITS EMBODIMENTS

In the last lecture I dwelt upon the fundamental contrast between the evolutional and the creational or cataclysmic view of the history of Christianity. We took, on the whole, the side of the evolutionists; and in so doing defined our attitude towards the documents of early Christianity. But before we approach these documents and the events which they bring before us, one more preliminary statement must be made. As we have marked our attitude towards religious history, so we must needs mark it in relation to religious psychology and philosophy. My subject is historic, not philosophic; and I would gladly, were it possible, avoid entering a realm full of shadows and of pitfalls, of the wrecks of decayed systems and the ghosts of the mighty dead. But through this land our path must needs for a short time lie. History which is not based on a preliminary psychology is unphilosophic history. It is absolutely necessary that I should set forth the main principles of religious psychology as I

understand them: but I will try to do so with all possible simplicity and brevity, and will studiously avoid being led into the paths of philosophic controversy.

Our first task then must be to consider the phenomena of religion working in individuals and societies. The views here set forth I have worked out by slow degrees during thirty years, in which my time for reading treatises on philosophy and psychology was closed within narrow limits; and during the whole of that thirty years I have gone on in one direction without backward steps. But the position thus reached is by no means a solitary one; on the contrary, it can claim close kinship with the results of various schools of thought. In France views of religious psychology closely resembling those here maintained have been set forth by Mr. A. Sabatier, the recently departed master who stood at the head of a great school of Protestant thought in that country. In Germany views nearly parallel have been maintained by the most recent of great philosophic theologians, Professor Lipsius of Jena. And in the University of Harvard, in America, Professor William James, one of the most distinguished of living psychologists, agrees with these theologians at least in the main principles of religious psychology. All the writers whom I have mentioned alike work on a Kantian basis, and all have developed the Kantian psychology in the same direction. To me the discovery that the land to which I had voyaged was

not solitary, but inhabited by some of the ablest thinkers of the time, has been a source of unmeasured satisfaction and encouragement.

I

All views as to the being of God and the character of divine revelation must ultimately be based on the views which we hold of the nature of man and his faculties of acquiring knowledge. That which God imparts He imparts not to beings in general, but to men, and to men of a particular age and nation. The higher parts of the divine revelation belong to man as man; the lower parts may but serve a temporary necessity, or contribute to the development of a particular nation or clan.

In the nature of man the supreme element is will, which dominates alike feeling and thought. Man exists in virtue of the power which he puts forth amid his surroundings: he is a centre of force first, and only in the second place sentient and intelligent. This is a view which has been frequently set forth in modern days. I have myself tried to enforce it in published works. But lately it has been stated with such force and clearness by Professor William James, that it seems best to quote his words. If we can confide the protection of our rear to Professor James, we may venture to push on with confidence even into the enemy's country.

"The willing department of our nature," he writes, "dominates both the conceiving department

and the feeling department." "I am sure I am not wrong in stating this result as one of the fundamental conclusions to which the entire drift of modern physiological investigation sweeps us. If asked what great contribution physiology has made to psychology of late years, I am sure every competent authority will reply that her influence has in no way been so weighty as in the copious illustration, verification, and consolidation of this broad general point of view."[1]

It is will, purpose, and volition which are the ultimate cause why each of us is able to form out of the mere chaos of outward sensations an orderly universe. "The mind," says Mr. James, "is a transformer of the world of our impressions into a totally different world—the world of our conception; and the transformation is effected in the interests of our volitional nature, and for no other purpose whatever. Destroy the volitional nature, the definite subjective purposes, preferences, fondnesses for certain effects, forms, orders, and not the slightest motive would remain for the brute order of our experience to be remodelled at all. But as we have the elaborate volitional constitution we do have, the remodelling must be effected; there is no escape. The world's contents are given to each of us in an order so foreign to our subjective interests that we can hardly by an effort of the imagination picture to ourselves what it is like. We have to break that order altogether, and by picking out from it the

[1] *The Will to Believe*, p. 114.

items which concern us, and connecting them with others far away, which we say 'belong' with them, we are able to make out definite threads of sequence and tendency, to foresee particular liabilities and get ready for them, and to enjoy simplicity and harmony in the place of what was chaos."[1]

The change in our view of the Universe when will is thus made its centre,—a change forced upon psychology, according to Mr. James, by physiologic fact,—puts out of court, it would appear, two venerable and widely spread ways of regarding ourselves and our surroundings. It puts out of court the Materialism which regards man as a mere resultant of the physical forces of the visible universe. And it puts out of court the Rationalism of those who suppose that thought is the secret and the essence of man and of the divine nature.

In the opinion of some of his critics, Mr. James carries his physiological and volitional view of human life to the verge of paradox. But of the fundamental rightness of his view I am wholly convinced, and even the vigour of its excess may be considered a wholesome corrective, as balancing the deeply rooted tendency to overvalue thought and to undervalue energy and character which has been formed in our minds by the influence of many generations of metaphysicians.

As it is in the microcosm of the individual, so it is in the macrocosm of society. Society also is swayed rather by force and will than by thought.

[1] *The Will to Believe*, p. 117.

The will of each individual is hemmed in on the one side by the conditions of the physical universe, on the other by a countless multitude of other wills, the wills of our fellow-men, with which we have continually to make terms, and which are ever thwarting our purposes and disregarding our wishes. And beyond all these wills of myself and others there is a greater Power than ours, a force which in magnitude, in wisdom, and in force passes our utmost thought and imagination, which lies behind the facts of external nature, which lies behind the activities and purposes of our fellow-creatures, which lies at the roots of our own being.

To realise this Power in thought is the great end of religious philosophy and of theological system. To attain to some communion with this Power in exalted feeling and passionate adoration is the highest object of religious passion and enthusiasm. To become a fellow-worker with this Power in the visible world is the practical purpose of religious organisation and ethics. This Power is the white mountain top towards which all the upward paths of religion lead, though they can never actually reach it. And according to the manner of their approach to it various religions take varied forms, living by that which they are able to apprehend. If will be recognised as the ultimate essence of man, it is as will that we must, whether in thought or in practice, regard the Power which lies behind all things. The Platonic schools have tried to bring God before us as thought, and the Mystics have regarded God as

love; but by science God can best be spoken of as will: that is to say, the conception of will is that by which we can approach nearest to the infinite and sublime reality.

And this phrase at once suggests a distinction, deep and fundamental, perhaps even from the point of view of speculative philosophy, but certainly from the point of view of practice and ethical life. The divine will comes before us in two very different aspects. First as law or condition, in the inanimate world, and in a great part of the animate world. Here experience reveals to us, more and more, fixed and changeless ways, a course which has no relation to human will. Even our bodies, including nerve and brain, belong on one side to the outer world, and are closely hemmed in by conditions which we can but in slight degree modify. But secondly, in the inner world, the world of spirit and of consciousness, the will of God appears in quite another guise, as ideal. Here it not merely determines what must be, but shows what might be and ought to be. In place of a scheme of invariable law, we find an infinite realm of thought and purpose, of good and evil, of that which is but has no right to be, and of that which is not, but ought to be, and perhaps in the future will become. It may be that in the evolution of the living world from lower forms we may also trace divine will and purpose. This has been and is maintained by many men of science and distinction. In this view I heartily concur, but I feel that I have not the right to insist on views in

biology. And all notions as to teleology, as to divine will and purpose, must have their real starting-place in the inner world, the world of moral action and of character.

I know not whether this statement may not in the eyes of some philosophers prove me guilty of that dualism in philosophy which is in some quarters regarded as a root of heresy. My answer is simple. Whether the universe in its ultimate essence be a unity or a dualism or a plurality, I know not. To my purposes the question is indifferent. All that I know is that the universe, as it appears in consciousness, and as it is presented to will, is a system of contrasts, mind and matter, will and resistance, good and evil. To the physiological view, which starts with the active powers, the world is in many aspects dual. If thought can reduce it to unity, by all means let thought do so. But that would no more affect the phenomena of the world, than our theory as to the nature of light will help or hinder us in choosing a pair of spectacles.

The part allotted to intelligence in the conduct of life is of great importance; and the higher men rise in the scale of civilisation the more important it becomes. For the divine will, so far as it is revealed in our fixed surroundings, can be by observation ascertained. We can partly learn by the help of reason what courses of action tend to the furthering of human life and the preservation of society. And we may be sure that that which raises and furthers life is in accord with the divine purposes,

while that which hinders life is not in accord with them. The more we know of nature and of history, the better able are we to choose the better and decline the worse. Hence the value of an ordered science of ethics. But at the best our knowledge of the world and of human nature must be very imperfect. We only see the shows of things, and such superficial aspects of man's nature as are revealed in consciousness. Beneath the surface there are profound depths. Thus, however far knowledge may progress, the deep workings of the human spirit, in which lies the contact with the divine, must have great moment in the conduct of life. And knowledge, with the scheme of ethics based upon it, can at most but map out a course for us; it can never give the impetus which will move us to follow that course. To the most highly educated moral philosopher religion is still necessary in the region of intelligence; while in the region of the will it is as necessary to him as to the savage.

Religion, as in these lectures it is regarded, on the intellectual side consists in recognition that the divine will is good and wars with evil. On the emotional side, it consists in the love of this good will, in joy in it wherever it is traced, and in hatred of whatever opposes it. On the volitional side, it consists in a determined effort to range one's own efforts on the same lines on which the divine will works, in trust and voluntary subordination. If the divine will be real, be actually existent, religion is also real: if the divine will be an imagination,

religion also is a thing vainly devised by man, without permanent vitality. One hears people say that if the basis of religion is but an inner witness, there can be no check upon the license of individual belief: men will hold any view which they wish to hold. This objection is based on complete scepticism. It assumes that the divine will is a phrase, a theory. For if that will be a living and working power, it is evident that to him who opposes it, it will be infinitely destructive, while to those who are ranged on its side it will be a continual tower of defence, a refuge in all time of difficulty.

The history of religion is the history of the gradual revelation to man of the divine will. This revelation I have elsewhere called the gradual penetration of societies by the divine ideas. And though the phrase *divine ideas* is in some degree misleading, as every such phrase must be, it is very useful. Only we must steadily bear in mind that these ideas are not intellectual concepts. They are manifestations of force, acting primarily on will and emotion, and only by degrees taking intellectual form, and embodying themselves in custom and art and organisation. They are to history ~~what~~ a settled purpose is to the life of a strong man. And as a strong man may fail of his purpose, so in history the divine ideas are but very imperfectly revealed. Why this should be,—why the divine will should not have freer course, breaking all that opposes it, and scattering the powers of evil,—we cannot tell. This is part of that wider problem

why evil exists, why virtue is imperfectly rewarded, and vice frequently triumphant, which has perplexed man since he came into being, and will doubtless continue to perplex him as long as he dwells on the earth. To practical ethics and working religion, these vast speculative problems are unimportant.

In the Spring the trees of the wood feel an inner impulse of life. The sap travels upwards through their stems, with varying destiny according to the local conditions. It passes into bark, into leaves, into flowers, into fruit, by processes which can be partially traced, but which could never take place if there were not present in each case the transforming power of life. As the sap builds up the stately structure of the tree, so does the flow of the divine ideas build up the fabric of religion. Everywhere it is conditioned, by existing social habits, by existing ways of thought, by existing organisation. The form of the fabric is determined by the inner force acting in a given environment. No revelation however divine can reach man unadapted to human conditions. We might as well suppose that food could build up a man's body before passing through the chemistry of digestion. Every revelation, to begin with, must use words: and words are each of them the result of a vast intellectual process, nor unless they be the names of concrete objects can they to persons differently constituted convey the same meaning. Every revelation is necessarily relative to its surroundings. An absolute revelation is utterly inconceivable.

II

The manner in which a divine impulse or revelation takes form amid visible surroundings, physical and social, has perhaps never been set forth in accurate or final form. The comparative study of religions is yet in its infancy; and it has as yet scarcely been applied save to the lowest forms of religion—those in vogue among mere barbarians. There is a very general reluctance to apply the same methods of investigation which have done so much to throw light on animism and on heathen mythologies to higher religions such as those of Israel and Islam, not to speak of Christianity. Hitherto inquiries of a psychologic or social kind which have been carried into the field of religion have run great risk of being turned aside or dominated by the strong feelings which cannot endure that the springs of the religious life should be exposed to the light of common day. With this reluctance none can fail to feel some sympathy; but I fear the time has come when we must learn to put aside our natural hesitations in such matters. In our days what is not subject of discourse and investigation is likely to be entirely lost sight of. It lies in our way summarily to sketch the lines of manifestation of a religious impulse, primarily thinking, as is natural, of the Christian revelation, yet being careful to check, by constant comparison of other religions, the views suggested by Christian history.

As the divine ideas, the dawn of which on the world is the birth of religion, are in essence rather practical impulses than any imparting of knowledge, their first visible effect is to be traced in an outburst of spiritual life. In the depths of some individual consciousness, amid the actions and counteractions of the human and the divine, a sacred fire is kindled, a purpose is born. The manner of that birth has been well described in the words of the herdman of Tekoa:[1] "I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was an herdman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit: and the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel." The force of the impulse is well expressed by another Jewish prophet:[2] "Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay." These prophets of Israel, that classical land of prophecy, were not primarily men who foretold the future, nor the revealers of hidden truth: they were preachers of righteousness, moral and religious reformers. The light which burned in them was not the white light of knowledge, but the red flame of enthusiasm.

In Israel, and in many other countries, the call has been directly to a social appeal—to what we should call a mission; but among the less social inhabitants of the north, and in more modern days,

[1] Amos vii. 14. [2] Jeremiah xx. 9

it has impelled men in the first place to a change of life, to a reform of self, rather than of others. But the difference is not of very great importance, for those who begin with self-renewal go on, if they have the true prophetic impulse, to an appeal to others, and become, often sorely against their will, the sources of religious movement. Thus the first visible symptom of a rising religious movement is commonly the formation of a small society of men who differ in their manner of life from those around them, endeavouring in some way or other to realise in the world some divine impulse or idea which has arisen among them, to make visible to men some phase of the kingdom of heaven.

When a man has a strong purpose in his life, its force is exhibited by the energy with which it overmasters circumstance, the absorbing vitality with which it seizes and turns to its own ends every person and thing which it meets. It is the same with a rising religious impulse or idea. If it be weak morally and intellectually, if it have no crushing grasp or pushing vitality, it soon dies away amid opposing forces. If it be strong, through having deep roots in man's spiritual environment, in the divine will, it soon sets out on a career of conquest. In that case there must needs be in all or in most men something that will respond to its appeal, as the corresponding strings of two harps answer to one another in vibration and musical sound. As a growing plant will absorb and turn to its own uses matter and moisture, so the rising religion will

proceed to dominate and absorb its surroundings. And in the process, it does not usually invent, but rather accepts and alters. The line of evolution is not broken, but bent in a new direction different from that which it had previously taken.

In the intellectual field, a rising religion is likely to appear more original than in the field of ritual and of art. For ceremony and art have a strong infusion of symbolism. And symbolism is by nature somewhat vague, lending itself to one meaning almost as readily as another.

Ceremonies the new ideas of religion may easily accept, attaching to them a fresh meaning. As every one knows, early Christianity had no scruple in accepting many of the ceremonies of the surrounding pagan cults: it only taught that the true bearing of these ceremonies had not been apprehended, that they had been by superstition perverted to a wrong meaning. Justin even maintained that the ceremonies originally belonged to Christianity, and had been copied by demons.

Art does not usually flourish amid the enthusiasm of a religious revival, for in all healthy art there is necessarily a sensuous element, which repels the asceticism almost always present in ethical upheavals. Ruskin has with his usual insight observed that the love of art seldom flourishes among societies and among nations which are strongly moved by the desire of righteousness. Yet when the first heat of a religious movement is passed, it usually leaves a deposit of emotion crystallised into the forms of

art. But art in its earlier stages is usually content to accept borrowed forms, so long as it may put into them its own meaning. Even the religious art of Greek paganism, perhaps the noblest religious art which the world has ever seen, was content at first to borrow motives and schemes from the more developed arts of Babylon, of Egypt, and of Phœnicia. Early Christian art made no scruple of taking over from the heathen such groups as that of Orpheus playing the lyre among wild beasts, or Hermes the shepherd-god bearing on his shoulders a ram; but to these groups they gave a new and a Christian meaning, Orpheus and Hermes giving way to the Founder of the new religion. History repeats itself: and in our own days, when Auguste Comte endeavoured to devise a new religion on what he fancied to be scientific lines, he determined to retain in places of worship the group of the Virgin and her Son, in which he discerned the most natural embodiment of the Humanity which he proposed to set up as the true object of worship.

Organisation, though it may have a symbolic side, is adapted to thoroughly practical purposes. Here, therefore, a new religion is likely to innovate, with the view to protecting and propagating its scheme of life. Yet in the world creation is of exceeding rarity: almost everything which comes into being is built up of the fragments of that which it destroys. A church may borrow organisation, not merely from existing religious societies, but also

from civil life. It will endeavour, or tend, to cover the whole field of the activity of the faithful; and thus becoming by inherent necessity political, it will wish to preserve what is suitable for its purposes in existing social arrangements. Thus did Christianity proceed. At first the separate communities of believers might appear, and did appear, to observers exactly like the small coteries of devotees attached to the worship of the deities of the pagan mysteries—coteries with which the Roman Empire was honeycombed. The Christians had to provide for widows, for the poor, for their own cultus; they had to unite for certain purposes with neighbouring Churches; the need for authority was felt more and more strongly. When a formed organisation comes before us, in the second century, we observe that the terms bishop, priest, and deacon are all taken from the civil organisation, which the Greek cities in Asia had carried to a high point.

However, the conditions of the present lectures force upon me two qualities—brevity and simplicity. I shall therefore confine my exposition in the main to the successive phases of only the *intellectual* development of religion, to the ways in which it is embodied and reflected in the realm of thought, rather than in the social or political phenomena of history.

In the primitive nature-religions, such as those of the Egyptians and the Greeks, the earliest and chief intellectual exponent is the *myth*, a very primitive product of the human mind, and a product which

does not usually bear moralising. But the higher religions, which have their origin in the spiritual life of a founder or of a society, do not rely upon the myth. If they use it at all, it is in the form of parable, tale purposely invented, and filled full of religious meaning. Such didactic tales will be found in the writings of Plato and other Greek philosophers. The story of the choice of Hercules between Pleasure and Virtue is a good example. In the teaching of the Founder of Christianity the parable played a great part; and it seems admirably adapted to preserve in easily remembered form the facts of the spiritual life. It is notable that the Apostles did not attempt in this matter to continue the methods of their Master. Parable had been among the modes of teaching most usual in the schools of the rabbis. But when Christianity came out from under the cloak of Judaism, it took other ways of commending the truths which lay at its root to the intelligence of the world.

The embodiment of these truths took a threefold course. Time is threefold—past, present, and future. And in relation to each of the tenses of time early Christianity produced a literary development. The manner of this development in successive periods and amid various surroundings, it is the main purpose of these lectures to trace. As a preliminary it may be well to show that in this procedure Christianity only went in the way of other religions which preceded or which followed it. It became from a small seed a great tree, under the branches

of which all civilised nations take shelter. But other trees of far smaller size and less noble destiny have exhibited the same manner of growth.

III

In relation to time past, then, the genius of a religion works in imparting an appropriate colouring to the history of its origins, especially the history of its founder or founders. In varying degrees the working of this tendency is kept within bounds by various forces, according to the character of the age and the race. Historic record and tradition have more influence among cultivated peoples, or in ages when a spirit of objectivity is abroad, and less restraining power among imaginative and uninstructed races. But nowhere can they wholly keep in bounds the transforming power of a rising religious enthusiasm.

In the fourth lecture I shall try to show the main lines of the earliest development of the Christian history, under the hands of the rising community. At present we are dealing rather with psychological principles than with historic phenomena, and it will be sufficient to show that, given human nature as it is, events could not take a different course. We have seen that the most noteworthy result of the progress of physiological science is to establish the original predominance of the active over the intellectual faculties in man. In few fields is this predominance more decided or

more obvious than in the writing of history, especially among simple and unsophisticated races. It was certainly not from any impartial love of truth, or any insatiable mental curiosity, that men at first took to writing the annals of the past. History arose to meet strong practical needs, to increase the fame of a monarch, to account for the habits of a people, to add to the awe with which a deity was regarded. Even when the human mind at an early stage is engaged in some activity not closely connected with feeling and practical ends, it moves often on a strange course. But when it ventures into the domain of history, full of all the strongest feelings and prejudices, it is swayed completely by purpose and passion, by moral tendencies and hopes and fears. The past interested men as related to the present; therefore they read the present into the past, and understood the past only so far as it belonged to the present. Their records were beset by every possibility of error, and haunted by all the idols of the cave and the market-place.

It may be said that the testimony of eye-witnesses is free from these sources of error. But those can be little in the habit of examining human testimony who attach to it a high value. The man of science is in modern days trained to observe with accuracy. And in our law courts the trained acumen of counsel commonly reaches some approximation to truth of fact. But even among ourselves, outside these narrow limits, few things are harder to ascertain than what has actually happened. War correspondents

are keen observers, yet Mr. Archibald Forbes has told us that he searched for years in vain to discover what really took place in 1870 in the capitulation at Sedan. And we in England are all used to comparatively precise statement and accurate observation: while the virtue of truthfulness occupies among us a place perhaps of higher honour than it has ever held in any country before. What then can we expect from people who have never been trained to observe, and who have not learned to regard truth in the narration of fact as the highest of virtues or the most obvious of necessities.

It is not so much that people in general choose to utter the thing that is not, as that it requires a particular habit of mind, or special training, to discern between fact and fancy. The races which are more richly endowed with passion and imagination are far less capable of veracity than those of more stolid and prosaic temper. Among individuals also, the less richly endowed by nature have commonly the least difficulty in making their words conform to the truth of things. In the East, as Renan has observed, the love of truth for its own sake is a thing almost unexampled. When a man there narrates what he has seen, he is under the sway of many motives far more powerful than the mere intellectual tendency to be correct to fact. The Greeks were less under the power of emotion and imagination than Orientals; but in their case the love of beauty of form in all their productions acted to much the same effect. A high authority has observed that among them the

love of the actual was not well developed. With them[1] "there was always an overpowering need so to construct a narrative that it conveyed a characteristic impression, and set forth a picture, the vivid painting of which produces an illusion of reality, and yet has but little in common with it." It was indeed this tendency which enabled the Greeks to create history as a branch of literary art, in contrast to the bald and simple, but not always trustworthy, chronicles of the great empires of the East.

Such were the tendencies of the ancient world. To understand those tendencies we have only to look about us in the world. Most of us have had experience of the extent to which preconceived beliefs will mould the testimony even of an eye-witness. And the more vital and moving the tale he has to tell, the more it is steeped in emotion and related to action, the more will his narration be tinged by what is within, and the less will it submit to outward restraint. Thus the simplest principles of comparative psychology, the most ordinary experiences of life, show us how vain it must be to take the records of ancient history as plain and unvarnished tales. Until we have discerned the point of view of a writer, examined his facilities for acquiring information, and his manner of regarding it when acquired, we cannot take the first step towards using his narrative in historic construction. In religious history still greater caution is necessary. A votary

[1] C. Wachsmuth, *Rectorial Address to the University of Leipzig*, 1897, p. 10.

will seldom regard the deeds and the words of one to whom he owes his soul's health in a mere neutral light. By necessity he idealises, and finds in the Master that which natural character and inherited hopes had compelled him to look for. A pious biography is a document of religion at least as much as a contribution to history. It must always be read between the lines.

It is the ideas which inspire a religion which are its living energy, its formative power. And to them the statements of witnesses, the traditions handed down in the society, are but material to be used for the building of a temple wherein the Founder's spirit may dwell, and which his followers shall enter with reverent souls. The historians of the origins will not of set purpose invent, but they will see in part only; and what they see will be transformed by the subjective conditions of heart and brain, will be tinged with the hues of imagination, and adapted to the necessities of preaching. Thus arose the histories of Buddha, of the Báb, of S. Francis, of all the great religious souls who have raised the level of human life and set forward in new directions the intercourse between man and his Creator.

IV

In relation to time future religious ideas find expression in prophecy. As in speaking of religious history we are apt to be misled by modern notions in regard to the sacredness of fact, so in turning to

prophecy we may easily be led astray by modern habits of thought. For to us scientific prophecy is a familiar thing. We are accustomed to hear that the hour and the minute of an eclipse can be ascertained beforehand, that a chemist can tell us with infallible accuracy what will happen when he mingles various substances, and the like. This definite kind of prophecy is possible only in regard to the operations of nature, and those only have the right to utter it who have been trained in scientific methods. But primitive man finds it difficult to draw a line between nature and humanity. In all uncivilised countries prophecies equally definite in regard to the future of societies and the fates of individuals have been put forth. But these prophecies do not belong to the higher religions. In primitive societies they come from soothsayers and magicians, a class with whom real religion is usually at war. In Greece soothsayers were despised; statesmen used them to impress the people, but the philosophers regarded them with contempt, and the priests of recognised cults would have nothing to do with them. In the most backward districts of Europe the wise woman who can tell fortunes still has a following; but these fortune-tellers are some of the least reputable members of the lowest races. Very different were the prophecies which belonged to the higher religions. Delphi sometimes riddled, but on the whole the Delphic utterances were wise counsels of politics or religion. The prophet of Israel was no soothsayer,

but a preacher, a man so divinely gifted with insight that he could look beneath the surface of events and see their true tendencies, reading the future in the present in the same way in which birds judge of the coming seasons, or the husbandman of the future harvest, feeling the existing tendency but having no infallible sight of events to come. So the insight of the prophet is not related to future fact—has indeed no relation to time or to the destinies of individuals. "Ye can discern the face of the sky," said Jesus to the Jews, "but can ye not discern the signs of the times?" Is there among you, He implies, nothing of the spirit of the prophets? The prophet was he who rightly discerned the signs of the times, and uttered with inspired voice his warnings and his denunciations.

This relationship of the prophet to the inward realities which lie deep beneath mere outward shows has been well set forth by Thomas Carlyle:[1] "A messenger he, sent from the Infinite Unknown with tidings to us. We all feel that the words he utters are no other man's words. Direct from the Inner Fact of things—he lives, and has to live, in daily communion with that. Hearsays cannot hide it from him; he is blind, homeless, miserable, following hearsays; *it* glares in upon him. Really his utterances, are they not a kind of revelation; what he must call such for want of some other name? It is from the heart of the world that he comes; he is portion of the primal reality of things."

[1] *Lectures on Heroes*, Lect. 2.

But of course in all things human baser elements are mingled with what is best. And prophets even of genuine inspiration have commonly fallen into the snare of supposing that what has a tendency to come to pass must necessarily come about within brief time. Materialism and the tyranny of the visible have partly dominated them; so that they have promised the immediate and obvious triumph of the good, the swiftly approaching destruction of their enemies. Seeing clearly the divine control of events, they have seldom been able to understand how slowly the mills of God grind, and how often what seems to be the divine will is hindered in its outward working. Prophecy was above all things the gift of the Jewish race; and it played, as we shall see, no small part in the early history of the Christian religion. And some notable Christians of later time—Savonarola for example—have been led away by intensity of feeling as to what ought to be into definite prophecies of what must shortly come to pass.

I do not venture to assert that the foretelling of events in future history is an impossibility. To say that would exceed the bounds of legitimate assertion. To any idealist of Kantian school, time is but a form of human perception, and it is conceivable that it might be at any moment pierced by the inbreaking of superhuman intelligence. But in these days we have to free history from the influence of metaphysical presuppositions. The question is not as regards what is conceivable or

possible, but as regards what appears according to available evidence to have taken place. Looking at the matter from the point of view of historic science, we see two things. Firstly, a careful critical examination of the circumstances of a past prophecy which is supposed to have met its fulfilment nearly always deprives it of its superhuman character, and leaves it either without foundation or easily explicable. And secondly, the whole testimony of anthropology is to the effect that if there be a second sight to which the future is revealed, it belongs not to the higher races, but to the lower, not to the great religious teacher, but to the soothsayer and the wizard. To soothsaying the higher religion of Israel was opposed, as was the organised good sense and intelligence of the Greeks. It still lingers in corners of civilised countries; but Christianity, to its credit, nowhere gives it open countenance.

V

The working of the divine ideas in relation to time present is more complicated. We have already seen how the religious teacher often wraps up truth for his followers in parable or allegory. It is commonly not the founder of a religion but his early followers who put the truths which inspire them on terms with the speculative intellect by giving them a body of doctrine. Doctrine is deposited like crystals when the seething flow of inspiration begins to grow cool. It is an attempt

to express, in language which will pass with the educated, the divine ideas, which are as we have seen at first addressed rather to will than to mind. It is necessary that doctrine should use the language and be accommodated to the mental habits which are current in the schools of thought when it is formulated. Hence it depends very largely on intellectual atmosphere.

Of course it is not thus that doctrine has usually been regarded. It has been looked upon, not as an attempt to find expression for experience in the language of the schools, but as a series of objective statements in regard to spiritual realities. The plain man thinks that when he says that God is good or that the soul is immortal he is expressing an outward fact. In just the same way when he says that grass is green or a fire hot he imagines that he is making a simple statement as to the nature of external realities. In either case a little psychology will show that the simple-sounding statement is couched in terms of relativity, and can only be understood when man's faculties for acquiring knowledge have been analysed. And whereas the great doctrines of essential religion may in spite of their subjective basis be true for all men and all time, as greenness and heat exist for all men, detailed doctrines such as those which make up Christology or Soteriology are expressed in the language of particular schools of thought, and when those schools of thought become obsolete, cease to have an intelligible meaning.

And from this fact at once results a consequence which is not at all generally recognised among those who write about religion. Of all the forms in which the ideas of religion can be expressed, doctrine is among the least stable. For intellectual atmosphere changes far more quickly and readily than do motive and impulse and the conditions of life. Human will is at all times the mainspring of the life. Emotions, lying closely about this spring, vary but slowly from generation to generation. But intellect, though its main processes are the same always, though logic is logic through all time, yet changes marvellously from age to age in its interests, its outlook, its appreciations. Any one may easily verify this for himself by reading first some poem where a great religious idea is emotionally expressed, say the Fifty-first Psalm, and then some ancient treatise of a doctrinal character, say St. Paul's theory of the spiritual body. The psalm is just as fresh, just as real, as if it had been written yesterday; the doctrinal treatise seems archaic, unintelligible, no longer having any hold upon our minds, though its associations may dominate our emotions.

As regards the expression of Christian ideas in doctrinal form, two tendencies had way in the early Church—tendencies which have been to us in modern days the cause of never-ending pain and confusion. In the first place doctrines had to be made into a logical system, and this naturally caused a vast deal of artificial construction and

fanciful development. We may compare an analogous process which took place when the mythographers of later Greece, such as Apollodorus, tried to make Greek myths into a system, and so put in the place of a fresh-growing development a hard and pedantic scheme out of relation to all reality. This attempt to explain myth by the mere application to it of intelligence, of cleverness, was the work of ancient rationalism. The rationalist did not begin by a psychologic search into the origin and the nature of myth, but took it as it stood, and tried to make it conform to his notions of the reasonable. In just the same way have religious rationalists of all time, instead of making a historic study of doctrine, desired to make it conform to their notions of reason and logic. The procedure is just like that adopted in regard to the phenomena of nature by the early philosophers of Ionia, one of whom found the origin of all things in water, another in air, another in fire. But physical science did not rise until men learned that facts must be discovered, not by the crude application of ready-made theories, but by resolute self-suppression and the subordination of mere intelligence to method and research. Sooner or later the same spirit will spread also into religious investigation.

And in the second place, when doctrines had been fitted into their Procrustean beds with their iron framework, they were taken up by authority, and enforced on all the faithful. Thus from doc-

trine men passed to dogma—doctrine sealed and warranted by authority. And being thus secured against the natural and healthy processes of gradual dissolution and renewal, dogmas remained through all the ages of the Church, like undecaying corpses preserved in sacred vaults, preserving the appearance but not the reality of life.

Of course I would not imply that all early Christian doctrine is thus outworn. There is in it much of that which is eternal, and which the world could not afford to lose. It was through the dread of losing what was best in it that Christian authority would not allow it to be touched: and for the sake of the good the residuum has been endured so long. But times and seasons happen to all things. And it may be that a time has now come when, if what is good in early Christian doctrine cannot be taken out for preservation, the whole of it must be cast aside as contaminated. There can be no question as to the growing impatience felt for doctrinal discussions among the English laity. It is a feeling which has suddenly arisen, and grown with such rapidity that it were madness longer to neglect it. We hear on all sides a repudiation of the recognised formulæ, and a desire for a religion free from doctrine. Religion without doctrine would be unintelligent religion, which could not hold its own in the world of thought, but would be transient as emotions and untrustworthy as sentiment. What is really wanted is not the expulsion of religious

doctrine, but the formulation of a body of doctrine fitted to contain those ideas of religion which are vital among us, and to present them to the world in a form which shall be suited to modern ways of thought. In a word, we want to substitute psychology for metaphysics, history for rationalism, and experience for authority.

VI

We have now, as it were, reached the top of an outlying spur of the mountain which we would climb, and can see our path before us leading on to the actual summit. Our business is to trace, with tentative hand and in mere outline, how the main ideas of Christianity took form in the earliest Christian literature. Into the later periods of the history of the Church we cannot hope to be able to trace their embodiments. Indeed our subject is narrower still. It is only the literary and intellectual developments of the ideas that we shall have to trace: it would be far too wide a task to try to sketch their working in all fields — of feeling and thought, of art and organisation. What we have to investigate is the way in which the Christian ideas found an embodiment—in the past in the history of the Founder, in the future in prophecy of the end of the world, in the present in doctrinal schemes.

And it will not surprise us to find that to each age its own realisation of the Christian ideas has

seemed the final and the only possible realisation. The intellect does its work usually under the impression that it is free, and that it is in contact with eternal truth. Really it is not free, but greatly dominated by the active side of the nature, by emotion and volition. And what it takes for eternal truth is usually temporary truth — truth adapted to a particular mental status, and coloured with the tints of the atmosphere of the age, whether an atmosphere of sunset or sunrise, of clearness or of cloud.

Only to a few in each age has it been given, whether by the way of intellect or emotion or will, to penetrate in some degree beyond the temporary embodiment to the underlying reality. One Christian here and there has succeeded in rising beyond the local and the temporal, and come in contact with the eternal ideas which make up the inspiration of Christianity, whose power still persists in all the ages. Such have attained, at least in some degree, to unity in the spirit of the Master, to a full membership of the Church, which is the eternal body of Christ. They are the great teachers and lights of the ordinary mass of working Christians.

But to the great majority of mankind in all ages the limitation, the outward form, has been a necessity. They see the idea only as embodied in what is outward, and are unable to distinguish between the idea and the manifestation. This fact explains one of the commonest phenomena of

history; it has again and again come to pass that those who have asserted what we now know to be true, have seemed to their contemporaries not merely to be in the wrong, but to be culpably and sinfully in the wrong. For example there were early Christians, mentioned in the *Second Epistle of Peter*, who doubted as to the coming of Christ, saying, "Where is the promise of his coming? for from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." Strictly speaking these doubters were right, and have been vindicated by the course of history. Yet the belief in the second coming was at the time so bound up with the Christian hope, that those who believed in it were almost necessarily far more in the right, on the whole, than those who denied it. In rejecting the prophetic body, those sceptics also rejected the great Christian idea of the dawning of a new order of things, and the exaltation of the Master.

It is the same in our own days. One here and there may gain a partial and temporary view of the ideas in their naked beauty. All who have historic education may to some extent discern in the past between the idea and the manifestation. But the outward forms which ideas take in our own times must almost necessarily seem to us more than temporary. They are real to us in just the same way as the world of sense surrounding us is real, which, though to every psychologist it is little more than appearance, yet to all men in their practical life

seems absolutely solid and objective. It is our duty, if we can, to find for the ideas of religion a body suited to modern conditions; and when we have found it, there will be little harm in fancying that it will be permanent. "Our little systems have their day"; but we also have but our day, and the system is as far more durable and important than the little lives of those who work it out as a coral reef, though brittle, is more durable than the insects which by degrees built it up until it overtopped the surface of ocean.

LECTURE III

THE HISTORIC FOUNDER OF CHRISTIANITY

We have now outlined our method of procedure. We have next to apply to the origin and the early history of Christianity the principles already set forth or sketched in regard to the nature of revelation and the way in which it is embodied in religious systems. Our view is that if the Christian origins are studied at all, they must be approached by the same faculties and examined by the same methods as we use in dealing with other religions. That we are Christians ourselves, beyond question makes this procedure exceedingly difficult; yet it is the only procedure which can lead us to results of objective historic value.

The history of a religion, we have maintained, is the history of the gradual translation of divine impulses or ideas into human forms. First into ways of life and behaviour; then, on the intellectual side, into history and prophecy and doctrine; then into organisation and ceremony and art. It is in every case an evolution, and it has to be followed by the

aid of such resources as the developed study of history has in these days put within our reach.

In the last resort Christianity, however spiritual or generalised in form, must needs have important relations to past history. The luminous saying of Amiel, "What our age especially needs is a translation of Christianity from the domain of history to the domain of psychology," is true, but it must not be taken too narrowly. Like most luminous sayings, it expresses rather one side of the truth profoundly than all sides alike. Psychology has to be employed rather to regulate history than to supersede it. Yet when we have grasped the true principles of religious psychology, we realise for the first time the full difficulty of religious history. For we perceive, on the one hand, that history cannot be studied in any merely objective and mechanical fashion; that we must needs judge of the events of the past in the light of present experience; that apart from a formed moral and intellectual system history remains a closed coffer without a key. And we perceive, on the other hand, that as present experience gives the light in which history must be seen, it often gives a merely subjective and misleading light. Inasmuch as the main features of human nature and the springs of conduct are the same in all ages, it is fair to judge the past from the present. Yet inasmuch as in less essential features man is gradually changing and developing, the present must in many ways make us judge the past wrongly.

As regards the Christian history in particular, it is to be observed that divine impulse and inspiration in those who wrote it by no means lifts them above error. This indeed is made obvious enough when we observe that various inspired writers sometimes give inconsistent accounts of the same events. Inspiration acts primarily on the will, but it also has a wonderfully illuminating power on the intellect. This illumination, however, does not extend to the revelation of fact. No inspiration of which any trace is to be found in history communicates to the inspired man an infallible knowledge either of physical law or of historic event. The search for what is matter of physical science has to be pursued by our ordinary faculties according to rigid method, and is not made easy by religious illumination. The same principle holds in regard to historic fact. Inspiration does lead men frequently to brilliant insight into the character and the motives of great religious teachers of past times, but it can never furnish us with trustworthy details as to particular events of their lives. For these we must go to testimony and document and the canons of historic probability.

Thus in regard to the actual facts of the life of the Founder of Christianity and the doings of His immediate followers, it is necessary to use with the utmost caution the inspired documents of the early Church. Indeed, the more evident is the inspiration of those documents, the more full they are of religious ideas and of Christian passion, the more

suspect do they become from the rigidly historical standpoint. From the evidential point of view the worst account one can possibly have of the doings of a hero is that of a devoted follower, who has not been intellectually trained, and therefore is not in the habit of precisely observing, or of accurately recording his observations. His record may reflect the spirit of his master far better than an account by an unimaginative and impartial spectator. But when it comes to questions of accurate chronology, of exact locality, of precise detail, then the testimony of a mere bystander is far more to be trusted than that of the devotee.

Of course a great many Christians will strongly object to the application of any such principles as these to New Testament history. They will maintain that the inspiration of the Gospels was such as to lead the authors not only into an appreciation of the character and the teaching of the Founder, but also into an exact knowledge of His career. But in fact the inconsistencies which exist between the statements of the various Evangelists sufficiently prove their fallibility. "But these inconsistencies," it will be replied, "may be reconciled." It was in this fashion that our parents laboured to reconcile the six days of creation in Genesis with geologic fact, and Joshua's command to sun and moon with astronomic fact, until in time they discovered that the purpose of the Scriptures was to communicate to us not scientific fact but spiritual truth. In precisely the same way, the scientific facts of history

are not matters of revelation but things which we must search out as best we are able.

The more closely we examine the documents of early Christianity, the more fully do we acquiesce in the dictum of Dr. Edersheim, that the materials for a life of Jesus,[1] in any objective sense, do not exist. It will probably always remain impossible to set forth even a brief narrative of the Founder's life which history can accept as demonstrated fact. Even the chronological skeleton of such a life cannot be sketched with certainty. And the outlines of events in the life are so hidden by the colouring of emotion and purpose, so distorted by the working of the Christian enthusiasm, that they cannot be made out. To the historian as such this is doubtless a great loss. But it may gravely be doubted whether, upon the whole, it has been a loss to religion. It has set every Christian theologian free from bondage to the mere letter of the Christian history, free to work according to the spirit, and to discern in the image of the Master an embodiment of such aspects of divine revelation as appeal to his own mind with the greatest power. In place of one stereotyped life of the Master we have a thousand lives, changing ever with the spirit of the age, yet always having some contact with reality and fact of history.

[1] I endeavour in these lectures to observe a distinction very conducive to clearness of thought. In speaking of the earthly life of the Master, I call Him with the Evangelists Jesus; in speaking of the exalted Head of the Christian Society, I use with Paul the term Christ. In cases where the meaning is between these two, the phrase Jesus Christ is applicable.

An excellent statement of the utmost that criticism can ever hope to accomplish in the restoration of the life of Jesus may be found in a work which does not refer to Christianity at all, Mr. Rhys Davids' *Buddhism*.[1] It will be easy to apply the words to the Christian instead of to the Buddhist origins. There is a great advantage in thus rising above the too strong prepossessions from which a Christian cannot wholly free himself, and in judging of what we cannot look at without emotion by considering what has to us no personal interest. "There was certainly an historical basis for the Buddhist legend; and if it be asked whether it is at all possible to separate the true from the false, I would reply that the difficulty, though great, is apt to be exaggerated. The retailers of these legends are not cunning forgers, but simple-minded men, with whose modes of thought we can put ourselves more or less *en rapport;* we are getting to know what kind of things to expect from their hero-worship and religious reverence, and delight in the physically marvellous; and we are not without information as to what was, and what was not, historically possible in the fifth century B.C. in the eastern valley of the Ganges. Scholars will never become unanimously agreed on all points; but they will agree in rejecting many things, and after allowing for all reasonable doubts they will agree that there still remain small portions of the narrative whose existence can only be explained on the hypothesis that they relate to actual events. I

[1] P. 16.

would maintain, therefore, that some parts of the story, few indeed, but very important, and sufficient to throw great light on the origin of Buddhism, may already be regarded as historical; other parts may be as certainly rejected; and many episodes remain which may be altogether or partly fictitious."

So again in a recent paper on the early documents of the Mohammedan religion, a great authority, Professor Goldziher, writes as follows:—

"In regard to this literature we have grown more cautious and critical. No serious student of Islam would venture to cull at haphazard sayings attributed to Mohammed and his first disciples, thence to make up a picture of the first state of things and the original doctrines of Islam. Modern historic criticism warns us against this antediluvian way of proceeding. It is the disputes of political and religious parties which give us the key to the documents, showing us the assertions or the aspirations which this or that saying of Mohammed, or this or that testimony of a disciple, was intended to confirm or to combat."[1]

In exactly the same way the Christian Gospels and Epistles can never be critically studied until they are read in the light given by the early history of circumstances outside the nascent society and parties within it.

I

If, in pursuance of the plan before me, I try to

[1] *Revue de l'histoire des Religions*, vol. xliii. p. 2.

set forth what I believe to be the actual facts of the Christian origins, to discover the cell from which the Christian organism took its origin, I do so in no presumptuous hope of wholly succeeding where far abler and more learned men have failed. I only approach a problem, which is at bottom insoluble, in the hope of forwarding in some measure an intellectual movement to which the labours of others have given birth, and a religious tendency which seems to belong especially to the conditions of our age. It is impossible that within my narrow limits I should attempt any detailed criticism of the writings of the New Testament. Such criticism is, however, accessible to every one. In particular, the articles in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* which deal with the books of the New Testament are usually admirable for critical talent and clearness of exposition.

It has been maintained by Professor Pfleiderer that accounts of the origin of Christianity ought to begin with the well-known figure of St. Paul, and work backwards to the Founder. That in history it is almost always right to begin with the known and thence to work towards the less known is quite true. And of course the writings of Paul are the earliest Christian documents which have come down to us. Yet in dealing with Christianity it seems to me a better method to begin with the Gospels, even though they be later and more compound documents. And for an obvious reason. If Paul had personally been a disciple of Jesus and an eye-witness of His life, certainly his account of his Master would have

claimed priority. But in fact Paul tells us but very little about the Founder's life, and that little confessedly gathered from hearsay. In the Gospels, on the other hand, there are certainly incorporated the accounts of eye-witnesses, even if the authors were not themselves such, and if they sometimes mingled what passed in the Church for sayings and doings of the Founder with what was really authentic. Paul is valuable to us, not as witness to the Christian story, but as founder of Christian doctrine.

It might seem natural to seek the greatest certainty in relation to the life of the Founder of Christianity in the Gospel of Mark, or the common tradition which that Gospel seems to embody. But to this proceeding there are two objections. In the first place, simple and primitive as is the second Gospel, we have no means of going behind or testing its statements. It comes before us as a completed result, and it is most difficult to resolve it into the elements of which it is composed. In the second place, the author of it, though he records many sayings, no doubt genuine, of the Founder, yet is clearly more interested in His doings than in His teaching. Now if one thing be clear as to the life of Jesus, it is that we can be more confident as to the character of His teaching than as to the events of His career. And for an obvious reason. The first disciples had very strong tendencies (as to which I shall have more to say in the next lecture) towards distorting the doings of their Master, and, generally speaking, nothing was easier than thus to

distort them. But the teaching which fell from His lips was generally of such a character that it could not be easily imitated nor even altered beyond a certain point. It has a flavour and character of its own, which one can learn to recognise. When a critic of paintings has gained from the minute study of the undoubted works of a particular artist a precise knowledge of his technique and style, he can venture to claim for that artist paintings which are unsigned. Unfortunately there are no entirely undisputed sayings of Jesus; but there are many sayings which almost certainly come from Him, and these form a nucleus and a test for other utterances.

The second Gospel does not, when compared with the first and third, contain so large an array of utterances which belong to the noblest teaching of the Founder. In parables, a favourite kind of teaching with Jesus, it is poor. The first and third Gospels are certainly full of what the Germans call *Tendenz*, purpose conscious or unconscious; and an isolated statement found in either of them must be received with some caution. But when they both give us accounts of the same teaching, then the differences which exist between the authors and the characters of the two works become a great help to us in the endeavour to discover what is the real origin of the two disparate versions. To Matthew and to Luke, rather than to Mark, an inquirer would turn who was anxious to penetrate to the true inwardness of the message of Jesus.

No view of the Founder could be more inade-

quate than to regard Him as a mere teacher, and to put His sayings in the same line as those of the philosophers, Plato and Seneca and Epictetus. In the case of these admirable moralists, inspiration was above all intellectual. In the case of Jesus it was primarily religious—that is, it came first to the will, and afterwards was expressed in thought. It was the life of the Founder which was the light of the Church, and the turning-point of religious history; in His teaching we see at most a reflection of the inner life. Yet possibly we may most clearly judge of the life from this reflection, since the mists of misleading tradition hinder our direct contemplation of it.

No passage in the Gospels has a stronger claim to be regarded as coming direct from the Founder than the Lord's Prayer, as given in Matthew, and in a summary and truncated form in Luke. A comparison with other passages in the Gospels shows that it contains the essence of the teaching of Jesus. Let us analyse it. It includes four petitions. One of these is for daily bread, as that necessary without which life is impossible. Another is for delivery from temptation and the power of evil—that is, for the divine aid which saves from the power of Satan and the snares of temptation. Another is for the forgiveness of sins; and here we must for a minute pause before going on to speak of the last and most important petition.

Teaching as to the forgiveness of sins is one of the most clearly marked and important features of

the revelation of Jesus. In several passages of the Gospels the psychology of the divine way of forgiveness is marked out. The teaching is that man is in great and constant need of the divine forgiveness; that without it he is an outcast and utterly lost; but that God in spite of His ready and overflowing love will not grant it except upon two conditions. The first condition is that man shall humbly and honestly repent of his sin. The second is that he shall forgive others who in like manner sin against himself. The divine and the human forgiveness are in several passages put absolutely on the same footing. And this might well have prevented the human duty of forgiveness from having been misunderstood among us. It is often supposed that it is our duty as Christians to forgive on the spot all who injure us, whether they ask forgiveness or not, whether they allow that they were wrong, or insist upon it that they were right. Now it may or may not be our duty in life to refrain from resisting evil. That is quite a different matter from forgiveness. But it is quite certain that it is possible only to forgive those who confess their fault. To say to one who is acting toward us as his conscience dictates, "I forgive you," is grievously to insult him; he does not ask for or desire forgiveness. On the other hand the teaching is very explicit that Christians are bound to forgive over and over again those who sincerely repent of having injured them. Jesus, who ever explains the duties of man to man on

theological grounds, teaches that this is also the divine procedure. And this teaching, like the rest of the doctrine of the Founder, is relative, and is within the bounds of religious experience. The forgiveness of sins, which in the Roman Church is represented as the privilege of consecrated priests and a miraculous act, appears by Jesus to have been represented as one of the constant and regular phenomena of spiritual life.

But in the Lord's Prayer all petitions are dominated by that which comes first, and which in the version of Matthew is expressed in two forms, a prayer that the Kingdom of God may spread, and His will may be done on earth. It is quite unnecessary to maintain the complete originality of this petition. In one of the Psalms (xl.) we find the phrase, "I delight to do thy will, O my God," and the idea of doing the will of God was deeply rooted in the later and more spiritual religion of Israel. Nevertheless these phrases of essential religion are here put in a new light. It is taught that the source of all ethical good is the divine will; that the divine will meets with constant opposition in the world; that the one duty of man is to place himself on the side of that will, whether by bearing what it imposes on him, or by actively striving to carry it out in the world. Here indeed we reach the essence of Christianity. The most notable books of Christianity are but comments on this text. And the most noble Christian lives from the first have been but attempts to translate it into real life.

The aspiration for the Kingdom of God may take a more individual or a more social form, accordingly as a Christian feels more impelled to bring his own conduct into harmony with divine rule, or to strive for the realisation of the divine ideas in the society of which he is a member. This distinction is indeed of profound importance: yet at the same time we must remember that when individuals conform to the divine purposes they move society in their direction, and that only through the hearts and consciences of individuals can the divine ideas work on society. And although the phrase "Kingdom of God" or "Kingdom of Heaven" is constantly in the mouth of the Founder of Christianity, His appeal came certainly in the first instance to the individual.

We must for a moment pause to consider the historic setting of this doctrine of the divine will. It is teaching of the most profound originality. And it took root and grew because it was in conformity with the spiritual conditions of human life. Yet at another age of the world, or in other countries, it could scarcely have been proclaimed, and had it been proclaimed it might have died away, because the minds of men were incapable of receiving it. The divine ideas, as they come to the world, cast their shadows before; and by a marvellous process the human mind becomes gradually fitted to receive them. The doctrine of the Kingdom of God as proclaimed by Jesus sprang forth as suddenly as does a dragon-fly on a summer day break forth from

the larva. But if the larva had not for months been living and feeding at the bottom of the pond, the wings of the dragon-fly could not have been formed. In every way the developed insect forms a contrast to the ugly crawling grub: yet the life of the grub is continued in the fly.

Two Jewish developments were at the basis of the two sides of the doctrine of the kingdom. Both in preaching the reality of the spiritual life for the individual, and in proclaiming the divine destiny of society, Jesus took His point of departure from beliefs and hopes deeply engrained in the soul of contemporary Judaism, which had become thus engrained by ages of struggle and misfortune. The new Christian life in God sprang out of the rigid and intense formalism of the Pharisee, which was the outer crust formed by the strong sense which had mastered the best and strongest of the Jewish race that the service of God and the love of His word was the only thing which made life in the world worth having. Jesus threw away the hard crust, and showed the inner life which it had protected how to develop under new circumstances and to nobler ends,—how to rise above the local and temporal and to aspire towards heaven. Bitter as was the opposition between Jesus and the Pharisees, it was yet from that body that His most efficient and energetic disciples came.

And the idea of a divine kingdom, of a spiritual community, sprang also, under the hand of the Master, from a dearly-cherished and deep-seated

conviction of the Jewish race,—their hope of an earthly reign of the saints and of the emergence amid the wars between Rome and Parthia of a new and purified Judaism, powerful in arms, but equally powerful in righteousness, ruling the nations not by mere force, but by the power of a higher life. Of the larva history of this hope I cannot, of course, speak; it has been traced with learning and skill by Professor Charles in an earlier series of Jowett Lectures. It is my business to trace, however slightly, the spread of the Christian doctrines of individual self-devotion and a righteous community; but we must never forget that the roots of both these doctrines reach back through Judaism to the very beginnings of the life of religion in the world.

With the Jewish expectation of a divine kingdom, Jesus also accepted and also transformed the Messianic hopes of His countrymen. The earthly kingdom of which they dreamed required an earthly ruler, the Messiah. When the kingdom was raised above the things of sense into the realm of spirit, the head of it also became not a conqueror and liberator but a spiritual ruler. His laws would have sway not in the visible but in the invisible world. The kingdom was within, and the king had his throne in the hearts and consciences of men.

That Jesus accepted the appellation of the Messiah and regarded the Messianic prophecies as fulfilled in Himself seems clear. The process by which He arrived at that belief is hidden from us. But few passages in the Gospels are more vivid, or

have more completely the air of transcriptions from life, than that which records the words which passed between Peter and his Master at Cæsarea Philippi, when Peter for the first time, it would seem, gave expression to the growing conviction of the Twelve that their Master was the Messiah, in a special sense the Son of God. In this confession Jesus saw a proof of direct divine inspiration; an inspiration like that which had led Him to believe Himself in His Messiahship, and to see in what new and transformed sense the Messiahship must be interpreted to the world. The divine idea must be embodied for the world by the help of an existing national hope; but in its revelation it must kill all that was merely earthly in that hope. As we shall see in the next lecture, the process of dying was slow, and was not by any means complete when the Gospels were written.

According to the teaching of the Founder of Christianity, the will of God is revealed to men in two ways—in the external and visible world as law, in the moral world as ideal. There are in the summary of teaching called the Sermon on the Mount a number of cases in which the divine order in creation is appealed to as a source of knowledge of the will of God. The happiness of birds, the glory of the lilies of the field, are cited to show that even the lower forms of life partake of the purpose and the care of God. The regular order visible in the signs of the sky is appealed to as a proof of underlying law alike in material things and in the

course of human events. Many of the parables derive their power and meaning from the assumption that the divine ways, which may be traced by observation in outward things, have close parallels in the spiritual life of man, which grows like the mustard seed, suffers like the corn from the tyranny of unfavourable conditions, works invisibly like leaven, shines in the life like a candle in a dark room. Yet though the life of the spirit is, like the lower life of the world, subject to law, it differs from what is material in that it belongs at the same time to a realm above visible law—to the realm of the ideal. The divine kingdom can be realised upon earth only partially and by slow degrees. It exists as a present reality only in heaven, in the divine thought and purpose. To every life is given a potentiality of realising on earth some side or part of it; and through revealing it every life may be transformed, and become a dweller in the higher realm, a loyal subject of the Kingdom of God. The dwelling on God's revelation in nature may help a man to trace the divine will, but its higher and more immediate revelation is given within, not through any intellectual process, but through loyalty of soul and a subordination of the private desires to a higher purpose—through a merging of the rivulet of the individual life in the great river of tendency which streams through the seen to the unseen, through the temporal to the eternal.

The religious view of the will is set forth in the Gospels as it is taught nowhere else. Yet the

teaching would probably have made but little impression on the world at large if it had been teaching merely. But the doctrine was but the intellectual statement of the active and living idea or principle which inspired the life of the Founder of Christianity, and which has ever since inspired those who were worthy among His followers. The divine obedience of Jesus is the fountain among remote hills whence has flowed down in a never-interrupted stream that loyalty of heart to the divine which is the living principle of the Christian faith. The river has passed through many lands, and its outward form has been prescribed by the character of its banks. Sometimes it has flowed like a slow and stately flood through great plains, sometimes it has been narrowed into rapids or has changed its level in a mighty waterfall, yet its inward nature has been the same, and its connection with the fountain-head has never been wholly interrupted. Rains from on high have filled it full, or droughts have made it run low, but nothing has ever completely stayed its progress.

But if the reality and the power of divine inspiration, which is the central teaching of Christianity, is also at the root of all other religions, we clearly need, in order to discriminate between Christianity and them, some more distinctive principle. The true *differentia* of Christian teaching seems to me to have been rightly set forth by Matthew Arnold in the word *inwardness*. The Founder of Christianity stands above all other religious teachers, because

alike in life and in words he strongly adhered to what may be called the physiological view of religion, —that "the willing department of our nature," in the words of Professor James, "dominates both the conceiving department and the feeling department." He taught that purity of heart leads a man to the vision of God; that evil proceeding out of the heart defiles and corrupts his whole being; that sin consists not in deed but in intention; that righteousness consists not in the keeping of outward rules, but in a right attitude of spirit; that obedience to divine impulse is the true source of spiritual knowledge; that a man is not profited if he gains the whole world through injury to his own soul; that the self-sacrifice shown in the offering of the widow's mite made it a more acceptable gift than all the treasures of the wealthy.

The religious doctrine of the will and the doctrine of inwardness are the essential features of the teaching of Jesus. But they are not set forth with the dry precision of the scribe, or with the playful intellectuality of a Plato. Rather they are surrounded by—almost lost in—a luminous haze of passionate emotion. Alike in teaching and in deed, Jesus sets forth the will of the Father in Heaven as not merely to be obeyed but to be loved. Marcus Aurelius regards it as man's highest honour to do the divine will; but with him it is a sad though loyal and manly acquiescence in the universal stream of tendency. A psalmist has exclaimed, "O how love I thy law," "How sweet are thy words unto

my taste," "I love thy commandments above gold": yet in the noblest books of the Jewish Scriptures one might search in vain for anything like the confidence, the passion, the self-abandonment, with which Jesus welcomes the impulses of the divine will. God is the Father in Heaven; but the love of God to man incomparably exceeds the love of an earthly father. In an earthly father there are limitations—there are selfishness and short-sightedness—which often check the stream of a child's love. But the river of love to God may flow on without fear of impediment or reaction.

The love of God as a holy passion appears reflected in the life of Jesus as recorded by the Synoptists. And since love is roused not by reflection but by instinct and contagion, from this source the love of God has flowed on into the history of the Church. But with the mass of Christians the love of the divine has been concentrated not on the Father in Heaven, but on the Founder of the religion. It is the divine as revealed in Christ, rather than the divine as the source of life to the world and of grace to men, that has in all ages most strongly roused a love which has echoed the love of Jesus for the Heavenly Father.

In the life of Jesus the love of God is set forth as the safest and most trustworthy basis for the higher love for man. In some modern schools this is sometimes overlooked, and the loving-kindness shown in the relations of Jesus to those about Him

has often been regarded as the fruit of a gentle and kindly nature, of a heart naturally open to every appeal from the poor and the suffering. In fact Jesus has been regarded by many of the pure humanitarians of recent days as their hero and prototype, the apostle of boundless unselfishness and desire for human happiness. There could scarcely be a more one-sided and incomplete view of the Founder of Christianity. He did no doubt show in life and deed an infinite pity for the suffering. But this was not the basis of His life. It rested on a purely theological foundation. With Him the second commandment, to love one's neighbour, was entirely dominated by the first, to love God. Indeed the second was a sort of corollary of the first. A man was to love his neighbour, because he loved God, and so loved the divine element to be found in every man. Men are bidden to love their enemies and those who behave ill to them, because they are children of the same Heavenly Father. Indeed it seems very clear that only by being based upon some such divine "enthusiasm of humanity" can the love of enemies become possible. A general benevolence may make one treat one's enemies with foolish weakness and culpable laxity; but it cannot make one love them. Love arises naturally at contact with some people, and aversion at contact with others: it is only by a divine contagion that love for mankind as such can arise.

Thus the idea of inwardness was applied by

Jesus not only, where it would seem most appropriate, to the personal life, but also to the life of the community. So far as men became the vehicle of the divine will they grew into unity one with another; they were absorbed into a realm where the will of God was the only law, and where personal feelings and interests, which are the causes of quarrelling and hatred among men, disappeared. Of absolute personal self-devotion Jesus could give in His own life a model. But a community of men actuated by the same spirit was not a society which could possibly exist on earth; it must needs remain as an ideal, which could be only in some distant way reflected amid human surroundings. The true Kingdom of God was always coming among men, but could never actually be present among them. It was within, not without.

It is precisely this inwardness which makes the life of Jesus, so far as it can be recovered, share the originality of His teaching. The Jews who believed on Him accepted Him as the Messiah; He appears to have Himself accepted the mission; but inwardness entirely altered the manner in which the call was regarded; and the Messiahship of Jesus became a thing which the Jews about Him, and even His own followers, could never comprehend. It became a call not to dominion but to obedience, not to conquest but to suffering. The great work of the Messiah was not to establish a visible Jewish kingdom, but to do in a supreme way the will of God, whether it led to happiness or to misery. The

Kingdom of God being the realm in which God's will was done, it followed that He who appeared as God's vicegerent on earth must be first not in forcing the will of others, but in conforming His own will to the divine. As to the consequences of any action, they lay wholly in the hands of God: the utmost that could be done on earth was to allow no cloud to interpose between God and the soul.

It will be observed that I have been speaking of the spirit, of the pure form of the Christian revelation, but have not said anything as to the earthly setting, the matter of that revelation. The divine impulses as they become visible on earth must be adapted to earthly conditions. If the Founder of Christianity held closer converse than any among men with the divine will,—if He had beyond all men faculties for the perception and transmission of divine ideas,—there must still have been certain ideas in particular which it was His mission to throw into a human setting. This is no doubt the case. Yet in Christianity the spirit is everything and the form almost indifferent. The Founder certainly did not fix for all time anything save the spirit of the religion. We should judge Christianity most unfairly if we determined to find in it nothing that may not be traced in the words of the Founder. The whole merit of the religion is that it is one which is not bound to formulæ and rules—that it has a spring of vitality and can adapt itself to the hopes and the needs of successive generations. It is the method of Jesus which lasts through all time, His

secret which is being ever revealed to the world. His concrete precepts, however admirable, stand but in the background.

Since, however, I am venturing in these lectures to set forth something like a canon of the methods of revelation, it seems but natural that I should make some endeavour to apply this canon to the utterances of the Founder of Christianity so far as they can be identified. Let us briefly consider how the divine ideas revealed by Him appear in the field of intellectual expression, of ritual, of organisation.

II

The intellectual expression of the teaching of Jesus is of extreme directness and simplicity. He does not reinterpret or reconstruct the history of the Jewish race in the colours of a new faith, as Paul and the author of *Hebrews* attempt to reconstruct it. Whether He by prophecy interpreted the future in the light of revelation is a very difficult question, to which I must return in a future lecture. But generally speaking it is the present tense in which divine truth is set forth. And of the two modes of expressing the ideas in the present tense, the methods of parable and of doctrine, He chooses the former, by far the simpler, and the best adapted to survive the shocks of time. The parable was familiar to the Jewish rabbis of the period, and it had immense advantages for a religious teacher, since tales are easier to remember than formulæ,

and they embody truth in a far more generalised form.

Thus we have the magnificent series of Gospel parables dealing with the life of the spirit, of the action of God in the soul, of the rise and growth of the Kingdom of Heaven. They form a rich mine in which Christian teachers of all ages have dug for the benefit of their flocks, yet the treasures of which are still unexhausted. They point out analogies between the course of nature or the facts of human relations on the one hand, and the phenomena of the spiritual life on the other. Hence it naturally arises that when the progress of science and the evolution of society throw new light upon the outward and visible element of the analogy, a fresh illumination is also spread over the higher truths with which it is linked. There is in these parables a profound suggestiveness and a stimulus urging us to carry the comparison, where possible, still further.

Doctrine properly speaking,—that is, a systematic edifice in which a number of truths of the inner life are set in relation one to the other in language borrowed from current philosophy,—is not found in the Synoptic Gospels. The teaching of the parables is supplemented by a number of brief and simple statements as to man's relations with the higher Power, as to the power of faith, the necessity of prayer, the duty of self-denial. But these assertions and precepts are put in the most practical form, in direct relation to human activity, not to human thought. What may be called the

relative tone, in contrast to the absolute tone commonly taken by philosophers, is very marked. The teaching is very general: it is adapted not merely to the times or to the Jewish race, but to mankind: yet it makes not the smallest attempt to pass outside human conditions.

Of ritual the only fragment which has come down to us is the Lord's Prayer. And the noteworthy indication that this prayer is given in fuller form by Matthew, and in briefer or mutilated form by Luke, points beyond all doubt to the fact that even this prayer was not repeated on set occasions or in a fixed form. When we come to the ritual of the Lord's Supper, as given in the *Didache*, it does not seem to have any relation to the history of that Supper as given by the Synoptic Writers. The baptismal formula given in the last verses of Matthew is demonstrably not that in use in the early Church, and so can scarcely come from the Founder. Christian ritual then owes next to nothing to Jesus.

Organisation was left by Jesus in an unformed state, although traces of it are not wholly wanting. The twelve Apostles were chosen to be the close companions of their Master; and with Him they wandered through the towns of Galilee, and went up to the Passover at Jerusalem. The little community had one travelling purse, filled by the voluntary offerings of friends, but beyond that we find in the tale of the wanderings but little trace of communism. Converts did not bestow their goods on

the Master, but left all to follow Him. As guests the party sat often at the tables of the wealthy. But when the Master retired to spend a night in solitude and prayer, the disciples did not accompany Him. Besides the Apostles, a mixed and varying multitude seems to have followed the Master, from among whom, as we are told, on one occasion seventy men were chosen for a special service.

It was apparently to the inner circle of disciples that was directed the remarkable series of ascetic directions which we find in the Sermon on the Mount, as to taking no care for the morrow, giving to those who ask, judging no one, not resisting evil. It is quite clear that a literal acceptance of them is not suited to organised society; would indeed bring it to an immediate end. But they are suited to the life of a small community, and indeed have repeatedly in the course of history been practised, by Christian monks and friars and by Buddhist mendicants. It is doubtful whether one or two of these precepts could be literally carried out by a society such as was constituted by the Founder and His first group of disciples. But in general they very nearly conform to the ways of that society—a group of men wandering from place to place, carrying with them a moderate purse kept by one of the number, but in the main dependent upon charity for housing, for raiment, and for food. Wherever they journeyed they entered any house open to them, preached the tidings of the Kingdom, and then departed, leaving a benediction behind them. They were marvel-

lously like the bands of Franciscans who in the Middle Ages wandered from land to land.

But by far the greater part of the teaching of Jesus was adapted, and was intended, also for less immediate followers. Indeed it is quite in opposition to the perfect inwardness and spirituality of Jesus that He should have made acceptance of the Kingdom of Heaven to consist in any merely outward observances. With Him religion was of the heart, whether followed in ordinary civil society or in ascetic retirement, although from a few noteworthy passages it does appear that He considered a nobler kind of self-sacrifice, such as the giving up of worldly possessions or the sacrifice of family and social ties, as the way to a higher spiritual rank.

From what has been said, it will appear that the message of the Founder of Christianity was so profoundly spiritual in character, and adhered so closely to the facts of the inner life, that there was in the direct embodiment of it in the world of thought almost nothing of temporary or perishable character. I say *almost* nothing, because there is perhaps after all a slight residuum in it of the local and the temporary. Jesus seems to have used in His teaching some of the scientific and historic theories of His contemporaries. He adopted the current theory, of animistic origin, as to the agency in the world of good and bad spirits, and put in terms of that theory important facts of the spiritual world, as well as facts of corporeal disease. He naturally regarded the Jewish legislation as the work of Moses, and

the Psalms as written by David. Thus occasionally in our day well-educated people have slightly to transpose some of His sayings. But it is a marvel to how small an extent this is necessary. His words are indeed spirit and life; the temporal and the material stain them only enough to make them visible to the dull eyes of His contemporaries.

III

We have spoken briefly of the teaching of Jesus. But to speak of the teaching of Jesus and not of His person may well seem to be treating the New Testament record in an insufficient, in an intolerable manner. The person of the Master is to His followers, to the Church, of incomparably greater interest than His teaching. Christianity is at bottom not the perpetuation of a school, but the continuation of a life. It is what Jesus was, not what He taught, that has been the salvation of the world. It is the connection of the teaching with the Founder, rather than its incomparable beauty and truth, that the mass of Christians hold of most account.

All this is true: and yet in the present lecture I can have but little to say of the person of Jesus. At present I am trying to discern in the objective spirit of critical and historic inquiry what, in the records of the Master's life, is most clear and certain. We can venture thus to approach the summaries of His teaching. But from this point of view, and by these methods, we cannot, as I think, approach His person.

I am aware that many of the most critical and the most modern of theologians have maintained that it is possible to derive from the Gospels the views of Jesus as to His own person, and the relation of that person to the Heavenly Father. And if theologians were agreed among themselves what those views are, then it might seem to savour of arrogance, or of excessive scepticism, to refuse to accept their unanimous opinion. But such agreement does not exist. We may therefore be allowed to hold the view that it is not possible to derive, at least from the Synoptic Writers, any clear or final view as to the personal claims which the Master set forth. That He accepted the title and office of Messiah is clear. That in His discourse He claimed an exceptional and unique position in relation to the divine cannot be denied, save by those who take a very sceptical view of the accuracy of the Gospels. For instance, His application to Himself of the title "Son of Man" has beyond doubt a meaning, though that meaning is hard to discern. And it is noteworthy that while He uses frequently the expressions "My Father" and "Your Father in Heaven," he does not use the phrase "Our Father in Heaven" as including Himself and His disciples. It would not show a want of the critical spirit to go further than this, and to maintain with Professor Harnack that Jesus assigned a special significance to His death in relation to the forgiveness of sins, claimed an unique dignity as King and Lord, regarded His death as a passage to glory, and anticipated a speedy return to

the earth as Judge.[1] Yet I cannot persuade myself that on strictly historical grounds these statements could be definitely established.

The truth is that historic methods may fairly be regarded as adequate for the criticism of the teaching of Jesus; but for the definition of His person they are inadequate. Consider how it is, even with our friends. We hear their words and see their actions, but we cannot by mere reasoning hence determine their personalities. It is only by an inner sympathy, an effort of imagination and of love, that we can pierce beyond the outward seeming to the heart within. Thus from the very first the person of Jesus has been interpreted in the Church in the light, not of strict historic evidence, but of spiritual experience. The history of views as to the person of the Founder is in the main a history of the evolution of the Christian Church. We cannot say Lo here! or Lo there! for the Kingdom of Christ is within, not without. This theme will in future lectures be largely developed.

I almost fear that this discourse may have seemed to some to trench upon the province of the preacher. But some such discourse was a necessity. Before showing how Christianity had been interpreted, it was necessary that I should sketch in outline what I hold it in origin to be. And at least I can claim that the discourse, whatever it may be worth, is a *lay* sermon. I have spoken in the interest of no Church and no creed; but only as one who finds

[1] *History of Dogma*, vol. i. p. 66.

that the phenomena of early Christianity can be explained only on certain suppositions. My procedure has been historically scientific, so far as I have been able to make it so. But science is only "ordered knowledge"; and when one has to speak of things which are spiritual, to try to explain them by merely material theories is not scientific, but the reverse. It is like trying to explain chemical combinations by the methods of physics, or like treating life as a kind of chemical process. There are many indeed who think that the spiritual life of man is a field which can be known only by ordained persons, or which must be mapped out by the authoritative decision of Churches; but it seems to me impossible that any such view can be retained by a Christian who seriously examines those phenomena of early Christianity which are our subject of investigation.

In succeeding lectures I hope to take up in order the earliest documents of the Christian Church, and to set forth what in regard to each of these appear to be the dominant conditions, intellectual and social, which at once hemmed in and promoted the manifestation of the Christian ideas. To attempt this in detail would obviously take us far beyond the narrow limits set us in these lectures: it is but two or three of the conditions that I can mention, and these but in a summary manner. Yet if my method be sound, I may hope thus to mark out the skeleton of early Christian history, on lines suited to our age.

LECTURE IV

THE MESSIAH OF THE SYNOPTISTS

We have seen that the teaching of Jesus is in its main outlines recoverable. The Synoptic Writers who report it may often indeed have dimmed its beauty or failed to sound its depth. But they have not distorted it through any desire to make it fit any ready-made scheme of orthodoxy. Where they have worked in with it the results of the experience of the Church in the next generation, it is usually not impossible to discern the later thought and the changed point of view. But when we turn from the words to the deeds of the Master, and the events of His career on earth, the need of historic criticism becomes far greater, and its application is much more destructive in its effects. The disciples had many reasons for being unable to discern in a perfectly white light the facts of their Master's life. Necessarily and inevitably they looked at it through coloured glasses, in a dim mirror, through a perverting mist. Every one of us, as all who know the rudiments of psychology are aware, sees in the world to a great degree what his training has en-

abled him to discern, and what with purpose he looks for. And the inspiration of those who wrote the Synoptic Gospels has not freed them from the operation of ordinary psychologic law.

Any attempt to discern the subjective elements in our narratives of the life of Jesus ought to set out with an inquiry why the Gospels were written at all. For many years after the Crucifixion there does not seem to have been any systematic attempt to reduce to writing the words and deeds of the Master. When such attempt was made, we cannot suppose that it was prompted by any far-reaching purpose of meeting the future needs of the Church, or that its sole object was to present to the world an exact and colourless record of events. As Dr. Westcott has put it, "The Gospels were the result, not the foundation, of the apostolic teaching." They were put into their present form in obedience to the demands, and in accordance with the conditions, of the time. It is true that in all the course of history we may see divine purpose working through and beneath human intention. None of us really knows what he does until time shows. It is not hard to discover reasons for believing the form in which the Gospels have reached us to be a divinely ordained form, one eminently suited to the needs of the future Church. But at the time little of this was visible. To a contemporary it would probably have appeared that present needs were moulding the Gospels into the shape which they finally took.

These needs were those of the infant society, which are well shown in the book of *Acts*. The first message of the Apostles to the Jews around them was mainly this: "Jesus of Nazareth whom ye crucified is the Messiah, the Christ. This is proved by the Scriptures, by the signs which marked His life, by His rising from the dead. Believe in Him and be baptized, and you will receive forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit, and be counted among the elect when Jesus comes again in glory to judge mankind." This message they sped partly by the force of preaching, partly through their healing of diseases and casting out of demons in the name of their Master. The Jews, who opposed them, both made light of the signs and exorcisms as being really due to a compact with Satan himself, and denied that the life of Jesus was truly Messianic and corresponding to prophecy. Now so long as the manner of Jesus' life and death was fresh in the memory of His disciples and generally known, each missionary cited deeds and words of His as occasion might rise. But it is evident that in this way a chaotic tradition would arise, and it before long became necessary to prune the too luxuriant growth of anecdote, to have a received and authentic body of sayings and of deeds of the Master. According to tradition the formation of such an authorised nucleus was mainly the work of Peter. But even while a body of tradition was being formed and set in order, the Christian Church, mainly in consequence of the

activity of Paul, was growing and changing its character, so that in the extant books of the New Testament, written almost all in the first century, we may discern various purposes and conflicting ideals.

I

Let us consider the character of the two main divisions of the little Christian society, the narrower and the broader. To the school of more determinately Jewish Christians which had its centre at Jerusalem, Jesus remained, even after the death on the cross, essentially the Jewish Messiah, the Deliverer. The day of His triumph was but postponed; very soon, in the lifetime of the existing generation of Christians, He was to come again in glory on the clouds of heaven, amid which He had departed, and was to establish on the earth a glorified kingdom, in which the saints were to reign with Him, and the Apostles to sit upon thrones judging Israel, and ruling all nations. Not the continual teaching of Jesus Himself, not even the ignominy of His death, had been able wholly to remove from the minds of many of His followers the belief that His kingdom was of this world. According to this school, those who believed in the Messiahship of Jesus, and joined the Christian circle, must conform to the law of Moses, without which they could have neither part nor lot in a hope which belonged exclusively to the chosen people. The Christians were to remain free as far as possible of all wordly ties, they were to

count nothing that they possessed as their own, they were to live in daily expectation of the trumpet-blast which should call dead and living before the judgment seat of Christ.

The other school was at once wider and more spiritual. It was ready to admit Gentiles to the fold under less rigorous conditions. It recognised a call to labour, not for Israel only, but for the whole world. It did not abandon the hope of a speedy coming of the Son of Man; but it also maintained that its Master had not really forsaken it, so that spiritual communion with Him was possible at all times. It interpreted in a less literal and a more spiritual sense the prophecies and the types of Christ to be found in the Old Testament. It even before long began to use the philosophy of Alexandria and Asia Minor to explain to itself the nature and the operation of the exalted Christ.

These were the two poles between which the Christian life of the first century revolved: the two centres about which in the fashion of an ellipse the early Church was formed. The leader on the one side was James, the brother of Jesus, who exercised a marked supremacy at Jerusalem; at the other extremity stood Paul and his school; while between the extremes were ranged Peter, the Hellenists Philip and Stephen, Barnabas, and indeed probably the majority of the better-educated Christians.

The ideas, the Word embodied in the Founder had to take intellectual expression in the circles

belonging to both these schools. In the narrower school the most important by far of its workings was that of which the result was the Synoptic Gospels, though in Luke something of the broader or Pauline spirit may be traced. To the Judaizing section of the society belong also the Epistles of James and of Jude, and the Apocalypse. The broader school has produced, as is natural, a far more varied literature—the Fourth Gospel, the Pauline Epistles, the Epistles of Peter, and that to the Hebrews. Roughly speaking, we may say that it was in the narrower Christian school that the great spiritual impulse took form in idealised history and in prophecy; while in the broader Christian school it crystallised into doctrine. If this, however, be the case, it is astonishing to what a degree the spiritual Christ, the Saviour who belongs not to the Jews but to all mankind, shines out in our Synoptic Gospels. The narrow horizons of the writers have not excluded the higher and deeper sides of the teaching and character of the Master. They are carried out of and above themselves by the rush of inspiration which had suddenly flooded the world. They are but earthen vessels; but so exquisite is the ambrosia with which they are filled that down to modern days the Christian Church scarcely gave a thought to the vessels—thought only of the draught of life which they held.

I propose to treat in these lectures first of the books of the New Testament which belong to the narrower, and then of those which belong to the

broader school. To both schools the Christian Church owes an unmeasured debt of gratitude. Both indeed were inspired with a permanent message to the Church. Both were dominated by the spirit of the Founder, and sought to express to the world the ideas embodied in Him. In the last resort it was the great moving idea of the Founder, the idea of a Kingdom of God on earth, which inspired both schools. And the relation of this kingdom to the person of the Master is what they try to set forth. But in setting forth this relation the narrower school look backwards to the earthly life of their Master and forwards to His return in glory, while the broader school look upward, and see Christ as the head of the Church, continuing in heaven and on earth the life which He had begun amid human surroundings.

II

The two thoughts in relation to the person of the Founder, as apart from His teaching, which especially possess the Synoptic Writers, are His place in the great historic plan of God, and His great spiritual ascendency over men. These two ideas shine out in every page of their writings. But in giving a body to these convictions, the Synoptists show certain tendencies, suffer from certain limitations, the understanding of which is necessary to a genuinely historic study of their writings. These tendencies arise from their in-

tellectual attitude towards the world and history; and it is the heat of controversy and the fire of missionary zeal which brings them into prominence. The most spiritual Christians of all ages have been willing to regard the teaching and the character of the Founder of Christianity as a sufficient and undeniable proof of His divine mission and power. But again in all ages there are multitudes whose organs of spiritual perception are less strong, and who long for a certainty which rests on external proof and intellectual demonstration. The earliest Christians had to encounter from their Jewish brethren a continual and determined opposition. Their life was militant. It was the opposition which in a large measure determined the form and manner of the Gospels. The spreading force of the Christian ideas pushed against Jewish anticipations of a Messiah, Jewish notions of the spiritual world, Jewish beliefs as to the future life. And, as is always the case, it was the opposition offered to the ideas by surrounding conditions which determined the manner of their manifestation. Necessarily they must be adapted to their environment; and by their swift adaptation to it they proved their vital force and power of growth.

The first of these formative limitations, if they may be so called, was the remarkable dominance in the Jewish mind of the sacred books of the Old Testament. The second was the popular belief or conviction as to the relations of the spiritual to the material, of will and thought to the visible

world. Of the influence of Scripture I propose to speak in the present lecture, of the influence of the current popular science in that which succeeds it. We shall find in dealing with both of these formative limitations that the attitude of the Jewish mind was based upon truth, upon reality, but upon reality imperfectly understood, and mingled with much that was fanciful, which the progress of thought compels us to set aside.

The tendency to find in the deeds of national heroes correspondence with current prophecy is one familiar to those who study ancient history. Many instances may be found in Herodotus, Pausanias, Plutarch, and other writers. When at the time of the Peloponnesian war a plague invaded Athens, old men remembered a prophecy current in their youth that a Dorian war should come and plague with it. There was a question whether in the original oracle the word was λοιμὸς, plague, or λιμὸς, famine; but Thucydides observes that as mankind regulate their memories by their experiences the first reading was generally adopted. "If," he adds, "there should hereafter come a Dorian war, and famine along with it, the oracle will probably be reproduced with famine as part of it." When Alexander the Great was at Gordium, in Phrygia, the chariot of the founder was shewn him, and he was told that a prophecy promised the rule of Asia to any one who could untie the knot of bark which bound the yoke to the chariot. Arrian says that there were two

stories as to what Alexander did. Some writers declared that he cut the knot with his sword; some, as Aristobulus, said that he drew out the iron pin of the pole, and so loosened the knot. What really happened we cannot tell; we only know the fact that the belief that Alexander had fulfilled the prophecy made the people of Asia Minor more ready to submit to him.

However, I must not dwell on these old-world tales. It is certain that the Jews looked on the fulfilment of prophecy in a more serious way than other peoples, as a result of the special sanctity which they attached to the Scriptures.

It would not be easy to exaggerate the love, the veneration, and the respect felt by the Jews at the beginning of our era for their sacred Scriptures. This was not merely the result of the admirable beauty and inspiration of those writings, on which point the whole modern world is at one with them, but it arose also from political circumstance. The Jews were no longer a small people, dwelling together in the close neighbourhood of Jerusalem, celebrating together the sacred national festivals, which, as they supposed, recorded and perpetuated all the events of their history, and having ever among them the ark of the divine presence. They were scattered among the nations from Rome to Babylon and Alexandria, in small communities, determined to retain among heathen nations their privileges and their laws. And everywhere the sacred bond which united them was the divine

book given by degrees to their ancestors, and containing alike their history in the past, ritual for present use, and prophecies of a noble national future.

And since the Scriptures were full of prophecies which described, or were supposed to describe, the future reign and glories of the Messiah, it was quite impossible that genuine Jews should recognise as the Messiah any man who did not in a great degree exhibit in his life the fulfilment of those prophecies. Whenever a very prominent figure appeared in the Jewish community, one of the first occupations of the pious heads of families would be to consider whether this might be the Messiah, and the test would lie in the comparison of what was told of him with the inspired words of Isaiah and Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

Historically it is exceedingly difficult to determine how far the claims of Jesus to be regarded as the Messiah were openly advocated or discussed during His lifetime. It is remarkable that Jesus appears, from whatever reason, to have desired that His claim to the Messiahship should not be openly spoken of. When Peter addressed his Master as Christ, the answer shows that this way of speaking was unfamiliar and a proof of exceptional faith. But no sooner had the Master suffered on the cross than the disciples came boldly forward to claim for their martyred leader the title of the Messiah, and to enforce the claim by an appeal to the Scriptures. This was He, they said, of whom the prophets wrote,

the Saviour long promised, and now at last come into the world.

The earlier chapters of the *Acts of the Apostles* are in many ways defective as historic documents. The author of the book certainly uses without much critical insight, though with a great share of literary skill, a variety of documents and a mass of traditions. Naturally, he is not possessed by the reverence for fact as fact which marks the well-trained historic student of to-day. But though we must be cautious in taking his word for historic events, yet he succeeds exceedingly well in bringing up before our minds and imaginations the conditions of the age when the Gospel of Christ was first preached. He paints with skilful hand the background against which the drama of early Church history was played. And he proves beyond any doubt how large a part in that history was taken by the discussion, whether in the traditional life of Jesus there could be discerned the genuine signs of Messianic calling; in particular, whether the life and the works of the Teacher conformed to the prophecies in regard to the Messiah which stood prominent in the national literature.

In the preaching and the speeches attributed by the author of *Acts* to the early missionaries of Christianity, we may find abundant proofs of this statement. In Peter's speech on the day of Pentecost, David's prophecy that the spirit of the Holy One should not remain in Hades is compared with the recent rising of the Founder from the grave.

In Peter's second discourse, after he had healed the lame man, he claims that Moses and Samuel had uttered predictions in regard to a notable successor, which predictions were fulfilled in Jesus. Philip, meeting the Ethiopian steward, convinces him out of the text of Isaiah that the life and death of Jesus, then fresh in the memory of men, closely conformed to the prophecies in which that greatest of seers had set forth the future redemption of Israel. Stephen, in his defence before the Council, exclaims, "Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? and they killed them which showed before of the coming of the Righteous One, of whom ye have now become betrayers and murderers." Paul, himself, is over and over again in *Acts* represented as constantly appealing, in his discussions with the Jews, to Scripture and prophecy. At Thessalonica he is said to have reasoned for three successive Sabbath days in the synagogue, proving from the Scriptures that the sufferings and resurrection of Christ corresponded to the words of the prophets. He persuaded the Jews of Berœa to spend their days in the study of Scripture, comparing what they read with what he told them of Christ. Apollos, as we read, publicly and with power confuted the Jews of Achaia, showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

If we turn from the history, largely legendary, of the *Acts*, and from the speeches which Luke puts into the mouths of the great advocates of Christianity to documents of undeniable authen-

ticity, such as some of the Epistles of Paul, we shall see reason to think that in this matter, at all events, Luke does not mislead us. Paul's mind was mainly bent upon other matters than the historic events of his Master's life, yet he begins the greatest of his Epistles by speaking of the mission of Jesus Christ as promised before by the Prophets in the Holy Scriptures. And in his account of the resurrection he emphasises the fact that it took place on the third day in accordance with the prediction of Scripture.[1] And the writer of the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, far more conservative than Paul in his view of Jewish institutions, throughout his book cites the Messianic prophecies in connection with the life and the exaltation of his Master. Among the less spiritual and the more strictly Jewish of the Christian teachers we may be sure that the argument from prophecy went even for more than it does with Paul. A great part of their lives would be spent in controversy with the conservative Jews as to the meaning of the utterances which made up the mass of prophecy generally regarded as Messianic, and in proving its correspondence in drift and in detail with the life of their Founder.

It is quite impossible that in such controversy either Christian or Jew should escape the intellectual vices and defects of the time. To begin with, they could not fail to deal with the text of Scripture in an uncritical fashion. They misinterpreted the

[1] Referring apparently to Hosea vi. 2, "In the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight."

words of the prophets and put into them a meaning quite foreign to their original purpose. When Paul writes, "He saith not, and to seeds as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ," he obviously misinterprets the text of Scripture, as he obviously puts legend and parable in the place of history when he writes, "They drank of a spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ." But Paul was an educated Rabbi, and it is natural that we should find in the less cultivated Synoptic Writers many examples, not of the learned perversion of Scripture, but of its unlearned misunderstanding. When Matthew tells us that there was a prophecy that the Messiah should be called a Nazarene, he is apparently referring to the word of Isaiah (xi. 1), where a deliverer is spoken of as a branch (nazar) coming from the root of Jesse. And when the same Evangelist wishes to prove from the prophets that the Messiah must in childhood visit Egypt, he cites words of Hosea, "Out of Egypt did I call my son," which in their context are meant, as must be clear to every reader, to convey history and not prophecy.

What is, however, still more to our present purpose, is the misunderstanding by the Synoptic Writers of the true nature of prophecy. In speaking of prophecy, in the second lecture, I pointed out how frequently in antiquity the scientific foretelling of future fact, which can only take place in regard to the operations of nature, was confused with the prophecy or preaching, which is based on insight,

and sees not future events but the tendency of existing forces, which looks beneath the surface of the present and sees its true inwardness.

It is the glory of Jewish prophecy, and the mark which distinguishes it from that of other peoples, that in Israel the prophet dealt far less with the future than with the present. He was first and foremost a teacher of righteousness—one who explained the purposes of God and made His ways bare to men. He was in fact a preacher. But in such early days, and among a people so little given to logic and criticism as the Jewish race, the future tense was not clearly distinguished from the tense of the ideal. The prophet who had seen and denounced the sins of his countrymen, went on to threaten them with divine retribution, unless they repented and ceased to do what was evil. And the voice which embodied the conscience of the nation was often inspired to foretell divine judgments as about to fall on those who had oppressed and troubled Israel, to behold in the future the decay of Egypt and the destruction of Babylon. This was a natural result of the prophet's perception of tendencies and his confidence in the working of divine law. Evil, he felt, could not in the end prevail, nor good be utterly cast down. But of definite soothsaying, of foretelling the future of individuals and of cities, there is remarkably little in the Jewish prophetic writings.

At the beginning of the Christian era the race of prophets had died out. And the sacred books

which they had given to the Jewish nation were regarded with an undiscriminating veneration, and interpreted in the light rather of the letter than the spirit. We must also remember that these books were written in a classical Hebrew, which the people did not easily understand. The prophetic promises of a coming national deliverer, uttered in times of stress and of hope, and the visions of an exalted and purified nation, were degraded until they were looked on as actual foretellings of events to take place in the future, as a kind of enigma given by God to man, to enable him to discern the marks and signs whereby the Messiah might be known. As the Lamas of Thibet identify the new incarnation of Buddha by some signs of which they have private knowledge, or as the Egyptian priests sought among the cattle for a bull which had the marks of Apis, so the Christ was to be known by the village which gave Him birth, by the events of His life, by His doing all that the prophets were supposed to have said that He should do.

Thus, when the first missionaries went to preach in the towns of Judæa, the commonest objection which they would meet to the proclamation of Jesus as the Messiah, would be that the life of the Master, His birth and His death, did not conform to the prophetic writings. How could the Messiah be born in Galilee? How could He fail to be of the family of David? He must, like the prophet of Isaiah, be silent in the presence of His accusers. He must, like the king in Zechariah, come riding

upon an ass. His garments must have been seized and divided among His enemies, according to the words of the Twenty-second Psalm. He must have made His grave with the rich, and so forth. Now, by far the easiest way of meeting these objections would be to say, "Exactly thus it was with our Master." And thus many tales, however arising, which possessed the great merit of bringing the life of Jesus into conformity with prophecy, would have a natural advantage which would ensure their survival in the competition for existence, and which would secure them a place in the biographies accepted in the society.

It might no doubt often happen otherwise. Some actual deed or saying of the Master might cause a passage in one of the Prophets to be read in a new light as bearing upon that deed or saying. It is very difficult for us ever to say of any event of the Founder's biography that it has no root in fact, but was born only from conformance to supposed Messianic prophecy. Yet we cannot doubt that the leaven was working. And in some cases we can trace its action with considerable probability.

For example, when Matthew tells us that Jesus went riding into Jerusalem upon an ass and on an ass's colt, the obvious difficulty of taking the statement quite literally makes us welcome the probability that the duplication of the ass arises merely out of a misunderstanding of Zechariah, where the phrase the ass and the colt is only a Hebrew manner of expressing an ass born of an ass. So

when the fourth Evangelist tells us that the soldiers at the cross divided the garments of Jesus into four parts and then cast lots for His tunic, it is very hard to suppose that this is a narrative of fact. For ancient dress was very simple, and leaving aside the tunic, one cannot see how enough clothes would remain for division among four. But everything becomes easy if we trace the origin of the tale to the verse of the Twenty-second Psalm, "They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots," where again we have only a duplicating Hebrew phrase expressing one single division of spoil, by means of casting lots.

The close interweaving of prophecy with recorded incident in the life of Jesus,—an amalgamation so close that it is almost impossible to disengage the two elements,—is perhaps best exemplified in the beginning of Matthew's Gospel. The account of the birth there given us is so closely connected with the words of the prophets that it might be set forth in those words without any connecting narrative. Let us allow the prophets to speak in turn, as their words were received by the early Christian society. From Isaiah we have, "A virgin shall be with child"; from Micah, "Out of Bethlehem shall come a ruler"; from Hosea, "Out of Egypt have I called my son"; from Jeremiah, "In Ramah was a voice heard, weeping and great mourning"; out of other prophecies, "He shall be called a Nazarene." Thus the circumstances and the place of the birth, the journey into Egypt, the massacre of the innocents,

the dwelling at Nazareth, were all conditions to which the life of the supposed Messiah must conform. It is, however, not difficult to see that in some of these cases the historic fact gives rise to the application of prophecy, in others the prophecy may probably be the basis of the narrative. Jesus certainly dwelt at Nazareth, and certainly in none of the prophets is it asserted that the Messiah should come out of that village. Modern commentators exercise their ingenuity in trying to discover what passages in the prophets Matthew can have had in his mind, whether he is thinking of the words in which Isaiah speaks of a deliverer as a branch of Jesse, or of the passage in *Judges* where it is said that Samson shall be a Nazarite—that is, specially dedicated to the service of Jehovah, or of some other misunderstood saying. Here, then, the fact is the origin at Nazareth, and the fanciful quotation from prophecy is an attempt to find in the prophets something corresponding to the fact. On the other hand, the journey into Egypt is historically most improbable, and seems an early example of the childhood wonders which sprang up so exuberantly soon after, clustering about the cradle of the Messiah. In this case it is by far most likely that a notion that the Messiah, like the Jewish race itself, must have for a time sojourned in Egypt, coloured the mind of the historian, and predisposed him to accept without evidence some tale of a flight of Joseph into Egypt. In some similar fashion, in all likelihood, rose

the tale of the massacre of the innocents, which is not only improbable, but of which, if a fact, we should probably have heard from other sources.

As regards the tale of the birth at Bethlehem and its circumstances, we can venture to speak more positively. It is almost certainly legendary, having its basis in the generally spread belief that the Messiah as son of David must come from David's town of Bethlehem. A passage in the Fourth Gospel[1] strongly confirms this view: "Some said, What, doth the Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the Scripture said that the Christ cometh of the seed of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was? So there arose a division in the multitude." These words take us into the heart of the controversies of the first century. When the disciples of the Prophet of Galilee began to assert their Master's claims, the first and most ready objection of the Jews would be that the Messiah could not come from Galilee, but must come from Bethlehem. There were various ways of meeting this objection. One was to cite in favour of Nazareth another supposed prophecy, "He shall be called a Nazarene." But any one acquainted with Hebrew would point out that this was not a fair interpretation of any text of the Old Testament. Thus there would arise something like a necessity for the production of a story that although Jesus notoriously belonged to Nazareth, yet He was born at Bethlehem. We

[1] John vii. 41.

have two perfectly independent, and indeed irreconcilable, accounts of such birth in the First and Third Gospels. According to Matthew the parents of Jesus dwelt at Bethlehem, and after His birth went to live at Nazareth. According to Luke they dwelt at Nazareth, and went to Bethlehem at the time of the birth, to be registered in some (apparently imaginary) census.[1] And again Jesus had to be, according to various prophecies accepted as Messianic, a descendant of David. Here a difficulty arose, because the Jews reckoned descent only in the male line. It might not be difficult to maintain that Joseph was a descendant of David, and we know that genealogies to prove this were forthcoming. But when it began to be whispered that Jesus was not the son of Joseph, these genealogies became useless, though they still hold a place in our Gospels. In fact in the beginnings of Matthew and Luke the controversies, the hesitations, the theories of the early Church are preserved like flies in amber, and we see in its working the process of adaptation to prophecy. The other two Evangelists, with St. Paul, probably took, as we shall see later, a quite different view of the genesis of Jesus.

III

It was doubtless a motive of piety which induced the Evangelists thus to search, like Christians in

[1] *Exploratio Evangelica*, p. 252.

later ages, for "reconciling views." And the "reconciling views" at the time doubtless took the line of least resistance to the progress of Christianity. Nor can the Evangelists, judged by the standard of the times, be blamed. But any departure from truth of fact is almost sure in time to bring its revenges. It is we, after eighteen centuries, who pay the penalty, and earnestly wish that the first Christians had had the courage to reply to their opponents that Jesus was not born at Bethlehem, but at Nazareth: but that His words and deeds nevertheless proved His Messiahship.

Thus the Synoptists, by mistaking the nature of prophecy, and by taking it according to the letter and not according to the spirit, drew a veil of materialism over the life of their Master. They did not imitate His spirituality, and so they formed unsatisfactory views of the purposes of the great prophets of Israel. Not like soothsayers or astrologers would these tell the day when the Messiah was to appear. Not like men possessed of a second sight would they see in a vision His daily life or His final sufferings. But as these great preachers of righteousness, these embodiments of the religious consciousness of the people, plunged ever deeper and deeper into the great stream of tendency which bore Israel along, and more and more fully realised what it meant, they began to see more and more clearly of what kind the great deliverer of Israel must be. Leaving behind the nationalist materialism which demanded a leader in

war, a scourge to the foes of Israel, and a founder of a mighty realm, they began to see in glimpses that the people was to be saved not by arms but by righteousness, not by the domination of surrounding peoples, but by self-control and suffering willingly borne for others.

In a sense the whole history of the Jewish race was a prophecy of the Founder of Christianity, showing as it did that out of the national adversity rather than out of the national prosperity grew the true greatness of the nation, that Israel must die to live, and suffer in order to do the will of God. This history in idealised forms meets us continually in the pages of the prophets. But in the words of the later Isaiah, and in some of the nobler Psalms, the clearness of vision and the prophetic passion of the writers seem in a measure to break the bounds of time, and to reflect almost as clearly as the Gospels themselves the main traits of the life of the future deliverer. The correspondence is of spirit, not of fact or event. And in seeing in the words of Isaiah and the Psalmists a literal prophecy of fact no doubt the Evangelists made a mistake—a mistake quite natural, and probably under the circumstances inevitable. We may see and avoid their error; but we shall be far blinder than they if we allow the mote of human error to blind our eyes to the vast outlook of spiritual truth which prophecy brings before us.

Indeed, while we admit that the Evangelists erred in method, it is fair to say that their success

is due not to error, but to a perception of underlying truth. They felt at heart that Jesus was not, in the language of some modern theologians, a "new moral creation," but that He stood at the end of a long evolution—that He embodied the result of a continued inspiration growing clearer and more definite as time went on. When this feeling had to find expression in words, the words were often ill chosen. But the fact remains that it was by retaining the root-connection with Judaism that Christianity inherited all the glorious results of the long and passionate struggles of the Jews after the higher life, and the Scriptures which formed the record of those struggles. As a matter of fact Christ was born neither at Bethlehem, like the mythical Jesus, nor at Nazareth, like the historic Jesus, but in the hearts of the pious through all the ages of struggle and of suffering, which had made Israel the great witness on earth to the reality of a Spiritual Power ruling in the supernal world which lies behind the world of sense.

IV

It is not possible that I should trace through the woof of the evangelic narrative the scarlet thread of prophecy going and coming and mingling with the substance of the tale. But there is one important section of the Synoptic history in which it is of unusual importance, and on this I must briefly touch. When Jesus had departed from His dis-

ciples, leaving them in many ways uncertain and overwhelmed with surprise and with doubt, disappointed in their hope that it was He who should have redeemed Israel, in those dark days the light of prophecy came to cheer their hearts, and to encourage them to exertion. Their Master must ere long come again in the clouds of heaven to set up a lasting throne, to establish in the world a dominion of peace and of righteousness, and He must come soon, before the living generation had passed away.

It may perhaps seem that in speaking thus I am confusing the pre-Christian prophecies of Israel with the prophetic utterances of the Master Himself, which, in His later days, He committed to the disciples as a parting gift. Here, no doubt, we come to a great difficulty, which will probably never be entirely removed. The writer of *The Book of Daniel* has recorded a glorified vision of the night,[1] "Behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man." "And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." We cannot wonder that this vision, born of the bitter sufferings and fierce enthusiasms of the Maccabæan wars, greatly dominated the minds of pious Jews during the second and first centuries before our era, and was

[1] Daniel vii. 13.

copied and amplified by the writers of the Apocrypha. It seems to be historic fact that Jesus was accustomed to speak of Himself as the Son of Man. The disciples, after the death on the cross, could not but observe that the great prophecy of Daniel as to the Son of Man had not yet received its accomplishment. Its fulfilment must lie in the future, in the near future, and expectation of the coming reign of the triumphant Deliverer played a part—a very great part—in all the feelings and hopes of the first generation of Christians.

But had not the Master Himself, while alive, foretold His return in glory? This is a very difficult question. Such prophecy forms a large and important part of the Synoptic biography. Most of the great critics of our age think that Jesus did foretell His own return. And yet there are very strong objections to this view. It appears on the face of all the Synoptic narratives and of the Fourth Gospel, too, that the death of Jesus came upon His followers as an overwhelming surprise and a complete disillusion. How could this have been the case if the Master had been accustomed to speak, as He speaks in the eschatologic discourses, of a brief absence and a glorious return? And it is remarkable that those discourses are not given to the very last days of the Master on earth, or to visits made after death to the disciples. They constitute a section of the common tradition which can be easily detached. Mark says that the discourse was made privately to Peter, James, John, and

Andrew. Jesus is represented as saying that He knows not the time when these things shall come to pass, but that it shall be before the existing generation has passed away.

It is difficult to say, in regard to any explanation of a passage of Scripture, that it is final and conclusive. But, for my own part, I find entire satisfaction in the view advocated, among others, by Professor Charles,[1] that the greater part of the eschatological discourse in Mark is adopted direct from some Jewish apocryphal prophecy. The vague hints of coming wars and earthquakes, the threatenings that the sun shall be darkened and the stars fall from heaven,—all these terrors belong to the stock imagery of the Jewish prophecy, and do not in any way remind us of the manner of Jesus. But intertwined with these conventional horrors are some phrases as to the coming of false Christs, as to persecutions likely to afflict the infant society, and to divide the parents from the children, which have a decidedly Christian air, and may well go back to sayings of the Master when He was oppressed by a darker mood, and more clearly recognised that the kingdom of God must be approached through great tribulation. Mr. Charles thinks it quite possible to draw a clear line of demarcation between what is Jewish and what is Christian.

This is a matter which a reader of Mark can test for himself. Let him read the thirteenth chapter,

[1] In his lectures on the *Doctrine of a Future Life*, p. 324.

omitting the following verses, 7, 8, 14-20, 24-27, 29-32, and he will find that all which implies a cataclysmic coming to judgment is gone, and that what remains is quite in harmony with the ordinary teaching of Jesus.

The accounts of the second coming in the other Evangelists go back to the same document as appears in Mark: we have only to suppose that document to combine Jewish with Christian elements, and we shall be free from any necessity for supposing that Jesus prophesied His own speedy return to judge mankind.

Surely to every Christian it must be a relief to discover so easy a retreat from an untenable position, and to find that the way of retreat is also the way pointed out, if not by the general consent of critics, yet by the agreement of some of the ablest among them. The Christian feeling, which is unwilling to think that Jesus elaborately prophesied what certainly never came to pass, and the intellect which discerns the great probability of an apocryphal origin for most of the eschatological section of the three Gospels, will be at one. It does not express any really Christian idea, but is essentially Jewish. The existence in Mark's Gospel of this discourse is a very striking proof how completely received views of the time dominated the early Jewish Christians, giving rise alike to narratives of the life of the Founder, and to anticipations of the future course of events.

At the same time it must be allowed that nothing was more likely than that Jesus should have com-

municated to His disciples His conviction that the course He was taking could lead only to death, and we can scarcely suppose that He would refrain from words which justified hope even in spite of that approaching death—words which they would be sure to misunderstand. It cannot be proved that He encouraged any belief in a visible return in the clouds of heaven. But if those critics are right who hold that Jesus believed in His own speedy and glorious return to earth, even then a want of accurate perception of the future in the Master would not affect the main point of the relation of His will to the Divine. It would only emphasise what is quoted as His own saying, "Of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father."

For my own part, I prefer to think that Jesus accepted His own teaching as to care for the morrow, that His confidence in God was such that He did not seek anxiously to look into the future, but was content to trust alike His own soul and the future of the infant Church implicitly to the care of the Heavenly Father, determined on one thing only—to speak the words and do the deeds prompted by a divine inspiration, and leaving the results to God. To plan for the future belongs to the statesman, not to the prophet. And in the story of the Temptation Jesus is represented as setting aside the temptations of visible dominion, in order to follow implicitly the leading of the inward voice.

In one of the strangely-blended elements which

go to make up the eschatological discourses and parables, it is almost certain that we reach the teaching of Jesus Himself. The notion of a great judgment of the souls of men, whereby they are divided for punishment and reward, underlies so many of the reported sayings and parables of the Master that it must have a root in His own words. The final and rigid separation of those who have done evil, and those that have done well, recurs continually in the Synoptic pages. But the setting of the judgment varies greatly from passage to passage. Sometimes it is purely Jewish: the nations are gathered about the throne of the Messiah, who has returned in glory and power, to await their doom of happiness or misery. This is the Jewish apocalyptic setting; and, if my previous contentions are justified, it is impossible with any certainty to be sure that it is authentic. But in many of the parables—indeed all but one or two—the setting is far more vague. It is impossible to attempt on this occasion to examine it closely, as I have endeavoured to do in a larger work. It seems that, in the case of the parables which are most authentic and most clear in their interpretation, the meed of reward for doing good and punishment for evil-doing is spoken of as a phenomenon of the life of the spirit—one of the profound and regularly working laws of the moral world. This fact does not, of course, prove that moral punishment and reward is regarded as belonging only to the present life. But it does appear that, by Jesus, the existing life and

that which is to come were regarded as but two provinces of the same great spiritual kingdom. It does appear that the great abyss and cataclysm which, to the ordinary Jewish mind, separated the present evil world from the millennial reign of the saints on earth did not for Him exist. Thus the judgment of souls in His view lay loose from the national Jewish setting, and was explained in the simplest and most spiritual of manners. His prophecy of the future world is a statement of laws rather than a foretelling of facts.

Though the first disciples were under the dominion of unsatisfactory and materialist ways of regarding prophecy, there is no indication that their Master was thus limited. On the contrary, in some of the many passages of the Synoptic Gospels which seem like breaks in the clouds, showing the pure and limpid depth of the heavens beyond, we may discern glimpses of a far truer and nobler understanding of the nature of prophecy, which can scarcely come from any but the Founder. Even in the midst of the eschatological discourses themselves there come a few phrases of another and a higher tendency. For example, Jesus says, "From the fig tree learn her parable: when her branch is now become tender, and putteth forth its leaves, ye know that the summer is nigh." This passage as it stands is quite spoiled by the sequel, which proceeds, "So ye also, when ye see these things coming to pass, know ye that he is nigh, even at the doors." That is to say, when ye see the sun

darkened and the stars falling from heaven, then expect the coming of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven. But this is entirely to change the meaning of the beautiful natural parable of Jesus, which speaks of natural processes, not of cataclysmic intervention from heaven in human affairs. On another occasion,[1] when the Pharisees were demanding of Him a sign from heaven, He replied that they were in the habit of foretelling the weather of the morrow by watching the character of the sunset, and that it was from such orderly and natural monitions rather than by any supernatural knowledge that they must judge of the coming changes in the spiritual world. Just so, when He speaks of the fig-tree as showing by her buds the approach of summer, Jesus reproves those who like magicians search the skies for portents heralding political convulsions, and bids them instead watch the slow and regular succession of the phenomena of the human world and the realm of spirit. Law may be traced in the higher world, as well as in the lower world of material things; and he who would read the future must study with the insight of wisdom the things before his eyes. It thus seems that, whatever was the case with the disciples, the Master clearly understood the nature of true prophetic prediction, and knew it to be based upon observation and founded on a conviction of the orderliness of the ways of God in all parts of His dominions.

And He appears also to have recognised the other

[1] Matthew xvi. 3.

half of the truth about prophecy—that the great Jewish preachers of righteousness were thinking rather of ideas and principles than of the events of the visible future. A passage which strikingly confirms this view is that remarkable account in Luke of the first discourse of Jesus in His native town of Nazareth. He is said to have taken as a text the immortal words of Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor: he hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord," and to have claimed that these words were in Him fulfilled. I do not feel justified in assuming that the historic setting of this discourse is accurately reported; but it can scarcely I think be denied that it strikes the keynote of Jesus' interpretation of His own mission and of His manner of regarding prophecy. The disciples, taking the words of Isaiah as a Messianic prophecy, to be literally fulfilled in the life of the coming deliverer, would regard the healing of the blind by Jesus as an external test of His Messiahship. He Himself looks at the correspondence in a spiritual manner, not in this literal and materialist fashion. He did not literally release prisoners, but saved them from sin; and in the same way the opening of blind eyes was not literal but spiritual. Freedom from bondage and vision of truth were alike the results of preaching to the poor.

Thus it appears that Jesus regarded His coming as a fulfilment of the Isaian prophecy, because He was in spirit one with the prophet, embodying in life the idea which had found expression in his writings. The true nature of prophecy did not escape His unerring insight. But what He distinguished the disciples naturally confused. And hence the stains of supernaturalism and of materialism, which deface the image of their Master as drawn by their hands. Hence an unhistoric element which has never ceased to disturb the history of the Founder as set forth by them.

V

The other book of Christian prophecy, the *Apocalypse*, lies somewhat apart from the subject of these lectures. It is a document with which criticism has dealt with considerable success. Certainly it was not written by the author of the Fourth Gospel, whoever he may have been, for alike in style and in thought there is the strongest contrast between the *Apocalypse* and the Gospel. Leaving aside the addresses to the Churches of Asia, which form the introduction, the rest of the book is evidently a work of Jewish eschatology, covered only with a thin veneer of Christianity, and in fact in many parts undisguised. Many passages in the book have as literature a high rank. It is impossible to read without profound emotion such passages as that beginning, "After this I beheld, and lo! a

great multitude." Yet it must be confessed that throughout the dreams and visions of that which must shortly come to pass, we find hardly anything of the spirit of the Founder of Christianity. To the author, the kingdom of God is to come indeed with observation, and to spread, not in the hearts of men, but amid the thrones of the earth. It is to make its way not by suffering but by conquest. It is most creditable to the judgment of the early Church that a work which must have had so great attractions for the narrow Jewish section of the community, should only by degrees and after much opposition have won a place in the canon. The utterances of Jesus, so far as we can recover them, are not in the narrower sense prophetic; the *Apocalypse*, so far as it is prophetic, is not Christian. The author clearly knows not what spirit he is of, and is of those who would call down fire from heaven upon his foes, instead of, like his Master, enduring all things, and so fulfilling the law of righteousness.

LECTURE V

THE SYNOPTISTS AND MIRACLE

THE second of the strongly marked tendencies in the minds of the Evangelists, which gave form to, and in a measure deformed, the image of their Master, arose from the current notions of the time as to the relations between the material and the spiritual. We can trace all known theories of the nature of the visible world and its laws backward to that very simple and primitive kind of view known to anthropologists as animism, which we find still prevalent in all savage lands, and which appears to be a stage through which all human societies pass in the course of their growth. At the animistic stage men see in the forces of nature the working of will like that of man; they think that the objects around us in the world, animate and inanimate, have in them a life somewhat resembling human life, and act with purpose like human purpose. At the beginning of the Christian era the cruder forms of animism had in the cities been long superseded. But yet considerable traces of the animistic theory of the world survived. In

two respects especially the relations between man and his surroundings, both spiritual and material, were understood on an animistic basis. Spiritual beings, powers of darkness and of light, were supposed to be constantly interfering in the human world, occupying human bodies, causing diseases and healing them, possessing animals, and having power over the forces of nature. And man, being in essence a similar spirit, inhabiting a mortal body, had with these surrounding spirits continual relations of amity and hostility, and like them could in exceptional cases impose his will directly on the bodies of other men, or even on inanimate things. There is, as Dr. Tylor has well pointed out, no original or necessary connection between animism and morality; and most primitive races in fact attribute a very low ethical condition to the spiritual forces which they suppose to surround them. But the Jews possessed beyond all other ancient nations the power of ethical vision. They saw in all things conflicting powers of good and evil; no spiritual powers were to their view indifferent or unmoral. Thus to them even the visible material world, to us a realm of supreme law and order, was a perpetual struggling ground of spiritual powers of good and evil. And power over this material world was regarded as belonging to men of exceptional divine authority — power sometimes so exalted that it could wrest the control of human bodies or other things from the spirits of evil, and dominate them in their place.

It was natural and indeed inevitable that when the minds of the Jewish community were set in this key, one of the first demands they would make of any man who appeared to come on a divine mission, gifted with exceptional powers, would be that he should show his credentials by exhibiting power in the visible world and in the realm of spirits. They would look for marvels, and not be very critical as to the kind of marvels. With us the line between nature and the supernatural is drawn far more clearly than it is among less instructed peoples. Sir A. C. Lyall, speaking of the miracles wrought in India by eminent saints, writes, "The word miracle must not be understood in our sense of an interposition to alter unvarying laws, for in India no such laws have been definitely ascertained; it means only something that passes an ordinary man's understanding, authenticated and enlarged by vague and vulgar report."[1]

But the distinction which the people of India, with other races at the same level of civilisation, do not make seems to be of great importance. Dr. Edwin Abbott has done a great service to the history of Christian origins by insisting in detail on the truth that it is absurd to speak of the "signs and wonders" recorded by the Evangelists in the mass—that we must divide them into classes if we would understand their nature. It is to be observed that many of the recorded wonders are by no means miraculous—that is to say, contrary to

[1] *Asiatic Studies*, p. 21.

experience, and in direct violation of the observed sequences of nature. These are to be distinguished from events purely and undeniably miraculous.

I

Unless we are prepared to regard the Synoptic Gospels as destitute of historic basis,—a view to my thinking untenable,—we are obliged to suppose that Jesus professed to work two kinds of wonders, to heal the sick and to cast out devils. Not only do the Evangelists represent such deeds as of continual occurrence, but they record many sayings in regard to them which are quite in the manner of Jesus, and which take their place in His authentic teaching. We must not of course attach implicit belief to the details of the tales of healing and of exorcism, since tradition continued for many years is quite incapable of accuracy in such matters. But the general truth to history of the Synoptic accounts of such wonders as these must be allowed.

When we begin, however, to compare and analyse these accounts we find some notable features. It clearly appears that in order to be healed, some faith was necessary in the sufferer, as well as power in the healer. In one town Jesus did not many mighty works because of the unbelief of the people. In healing two blind men Jesus said, "According to your faith be it done unto you." To a woman He said, "Thy faith hath made thee whole." This saying indeed He seems to

have repeated on several occasions. Paul, we read in *Acts*, continuing the same line of action, looking on a lame man, saw that he had faith to be healed, and so bade him stand up. Now deeds of healing, in which a certain undefined power in the healer is met by faith in the person healed, are in no way miraculous. History simply abounds with them; and though they are peculiarly liable to be mixed with imposture, and are looked coldly on by the more rigid schools of medicine, it is impossible in reason to doubt their existence. Jesus stands in history as one among a number of faith-healers. Whether the cures which He wrought were more numerous and more striking than those wrought by others no one can say who has not sifted all the evidence; and the evidence in such matters is exceedingly hard to sift.

Faith-healing by means of hypnotism and suggestion is practised every day in Europe and America. And we have to face the fact that those who work cures in this manner, though usually men of some distinction, are by no means always noted for high moral or spiritual qualities. What gives one man rather than another this strange power over feebler natures is, I presume, not clearly known. But we can say with certainty that it is not always the possession of the highest ethical and religious qualities. Even the instinct which makes barbarians dread and obey the medicine-man does not necessarily make them respect him. Thus it is impossible to consider the power of healing disease

by suggestion as a proof of any divine mission, though at the same time it is quite compatible with spiritual eminence, and even seems naturally to belong to the religious leader.

In ascribing the presence of disease, especially the diseases of epilepsy and insanity, to diabolic agency, Jesus doubtless spoke in the manner of the age. As there is no need to attribute to the Founder of Christianity a supernatural knowledge of the laws of chemistry or biology, or of the facts of history, there does not appear to be any reason why there should be attributed to Him a supernatural knowledge of the causes of disease. But no one can fail to be aware that the activity in the world of evil spirits is a part not primarily of the theory of disease held by Jesus, but of His ethical and spiritual teaching. He certainly regarded the world and human souls as the battle-ground of the contending hosts of light and of darkness. Here again He used the language of His age and country. I do not see that we need hesitate to say that this language was not scientifically accurate, or that we thereby cast any slur on the Founder of the Christian religion, so long as we believe that the facts expressed in this imperfect and inexact language are real facts. All language must necessarily be imperfect. But the question whether good and evil impulses which appear to come from without do struggle in the human heart is a question of fact. Any modern who does not believe in temptation to evil, and in

divine aid in resisting such temptation, cannot accept the Christian view of the moral world. But those who accept as fact the constant conflict of good and evil in the human world, are at liberty to regard as comparatively unimportant the terms in which that conflict are expressed. It may be doubted whether there is any language which better expresses the facts than the ancient phrases as to good and evil angels, symbolical though they may sound to us, and no longer to be taken literally.

It may be said that the view which attributes disease as well as sin to the agency of evil spirits is in conflict with pathologic facts. To some extent this may be true. The ancients did not analyse or distinguish various kinds of disease so clearly as we. Yet surely it must be allowed that such disease as can be removed by a meeting of faith and will cannot be entirely material in its origin. The nerves are as it were the battle-ground of will and of matter; and probably the rigid schools of medicine carry too far their tendency to seek for a merely physical origin of such diseases as have their principal seat in the nerves.

II

Passing beyond mere faith-healing and exorcism, we come to the accounts of miracle proper — to deeds inconsistent with our experience of the working of law in the material world. Here we pass, if one may venture to speak quite plainly, from

the realm of actual to that of ideal history. Jesus as a healer of disease is historic; and the tales told of His cures, though doubtless deformed by exaggeration and distorted by very imperfect physiological knowledge, rest on a basis of fact. But Jesus as turning water into wine, as feeding multitudes from a few baskets of food, and the like, belongs not to history, but to a perfectly familiar field of pseudo-historic tale and legend. It is true that to draw the line between mere marvel and miracle proper is by no means easy. It is also not easy to draw a rigid line between history and myth; but we must needs endeavour to draw such a line, unless we would altogether surrender the scientific basis of history. The investigation of faith-healing belongs to history; the investigation of miracle proper belongs rather to anthropology, to which science the supposed miracle is a matter of every day familiarity.

In the mental atmosphere, filled with shallow rationalism, of the eighteenth century, Christian miracles were to free-thinkers the result of imposture in the Master and easy credulity in the disciples, while they were to the orthodox phenomena which stood apart from the whole stream of history, and which had to be accepted by faith as an external testimony to the truth of the Christian revelation. The modern point of view is very different. Whether we investigate the history of the past, or turn our attention to the less civilised countries of the world in which we live, we find

that no class of phenomena is a more constant concomitant of the story of the rise and progress of religions than the miraculous; that a prophet will scarcely be listened to in any land, unless he is credited by his followers with the power of reversing or superseding the laws of nature; that marvels follow the steps of the saint by an inevitable law of human nature. This is, as we have already observed, a corollary or survival of the animistic manner of regarding the visible world.

The tendency of the disciples of a great religious teacher to ascribe to him miracles is a tendency which varies in force according to time and place,—a tendency kept within narrower bounds when the time is more civilised, and the place within the field of scientific observation; but kept within less definite limits when the religion arises in remote districts, or in days before the birth of regular history.

In Greece there were many sects or schools of religion of a mystic and enthusiastic type, which referred their own origin to persons, sometimes mythical, sometimes historical, but in any case raised above the level of ordinary mankind. The Orphic Societies traced their origin to Orpheus, who with his lyre was said to have been able to charm to tameness the fiercest of wild beasts, and who once went down into the world of the dead to bring thence his beloved Eurydice. Orpheus was said to be a son of the Muse Calliope, and the favoured mediator to whom the gods entrusted the know-

ledge of the means of purification and approach to themselves. Probably Orpheus never existed except in the imagination of the Orphic votaries. But we find a kindred figure of more historic type in Pythagoras, who was probably a native of Samos, but who founded in Italy a society which may almost be called a church. Earlier writers, such as Herodotus, tell us of his wanderings in search of wisdom as far as Egypt. But by degrees his life became embroidered with tales of strange marvels. It is told that he was a son of Apollo, and as a sign of superhuman origin had a hip of gold, that he had power over animals, held converse with divine beings, listened to the harmony of the spheres, descended into Hades, and knew the secrets of his own previous existences on the earth, and of those of others. It was not uncommon in Greece, as to this day it is not uncommon in India, for those distinguished for wisdom and knowledge of the divine to have assigned to them after death a shrine and a priesthood. And under the influence of these priests the mortal life of the departed saint soon grew into a tale of wonder.

If such things happened among the Greeks, the most sane, the least fantastic in practice and belief among mankind, we may naturally expect still greater transformations of sober history in connection with the founders of the great religions which have most moved mankind. And every one knows that it is so.

Perhaps of all the great founders of religions Mohammed has been least transformed by his followers. The desert Arab is naturally sceptical, and sees things as they are. It was not until Islam reached the more imaginative races of Syria and Persia that the traditional life of the prophet began to take fantastic forms. As a great authority, M. Dozy, has written, "The life of the prophet is adorned with a great variety of legends, often clad with all the glamour of poetry. Thus no doubt historic truth has been completely disguised, especially in more recent versions, more particularly in what relates to the youth of Mohammed and his sojourn at Mecca. But the earlier biographers have infused the marvellous with so little skill that one can commonly with a little critical tact distinguish between truth and fiction. Mohammed has never become a mythical or supernatural being."[1] The same authority gives an example,[2] which shows how easy in general is the process which transfers to a new level recorded facts of religious history. "At the outset of his mission Mohammed said that he also had dwelt in error, since he had taken part in the worship of idols; but God, he declared, had opened his heart. This figurative phrase was taken literally, and gave rise to the following tale, which was placed in Mohammed's own mouth :—'One day when I was lying on my side near the Kaaba, some one approached and cut open my body from chest to abdomen, and took

[1] Dozy, *Histoire de l'Islamisme*, p. 132. [2] *Ibid.* p. 126.

out my heart. There was brought to me a basin of gold filled with faith: in it my heart was washed and replaced in me.' According to this tradition, as found in the earliest form of the tale in Bokhari, the purification of the heart took place just before the ascension of Mohammed; but other traditions preferred to represent the purification as having taken place before the call to the office of prophet. In this direction, therefore, the tale was remodelled; but as it still remained a scandal that Mohammed should have erred, the time of purification was moved farther and farther back, first to his twentieth year, then to his eleventh, finally to his earliest infancy." This is an excellent example of the plasticity of religious history when the practical needs of a religious society are brought to bear upon it.

In a very different medium grew to maturity the tale of the life of Gautama. The ancient Hindoos were a people whose mind seems to have been, like their art, deficient in moderation and balance, and to have tended towards the colossal and the grotesque. Thus from the first the life of Gautama was overlaid with outward marvel. Instead of describing the process in my own words, it will be better that I should quote from the writings of a recognised authority, Mr. Rhys Davids.[1] "Gautama himself was very early regarded as omniscient, and absolutely sinless." "As a consequence of this doctrine the belief soon sprang

[1] *Buddhism*, p. 182.

up that he could not have been, that he was not, born as ordinary men are; that he had no earthly father; that he descended of his own accord into his mother's womb from his throne in heaven; and that he gave unmistakable signs, immediately after his birth, of his high character and of his future greatness. Earth and heaven at his birth united to pay him homage; the very trees bent of their own accord over his mother, and the angels and archangels were ever present with their help."

In modern India the same human tendency broiders the lives of the saint and the ascetic with a tissue of miracle. Sir A. C. Lyall[1] observes that he who exhibits great religious devotion or shows contempt for what is valued by others is still in India "sure to be credited with miracles, probably during his life, assuredly after his death." And indeed it is easy in India to find examples of saints who have not merely passed as workers of miracles, but have after their death been accorded a place in the Pantheon, and been regarded as great powers of the invisible world. In that wonderful country the road to apotheosis is by no means closed to men.

One who is personally acquainted with Mohammedanism in North Africa, M. E. Doutté, writes as follows:[2] "When Trumelet says that now miracles are rarer than of old, he speaks inexactly. I myself, in my duty as native administrator, have never

[1] *Asiatic Studies*, p. 21.

[2] *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, vol. xl. p. 355.

spoken to the Arabs about a local saint, even about one still living, without hearing of some recent miracle of his, that a man who had perjured himself broke a limb on leaving the saint's presence, that another had been rooted to the ground until he gave up some evil purpose which he had formed, that another endeavouring to enter the grotto of the saint had seen it grow too narrow to admit him." One of these Mohammedan saints killed at a distance a woman who was intending to commit adultery. Another narrates the past history and foretells the future fortunes of his chance visitants. An odd tale is told of a saint, who, travelling in a train, caused it to stop at the time of prayer, nor could any efforts of the engineer move it until the prayer was ended.

It is notorious that the miracles of the Founder of Christianity have been supplemented in all ages of the Church by similar wonders performed by Christian saints. The Church of Rome has commonly required evidence of miraculous powers in those whom she raises to the saintly rank. The inspiration of the Church has always been accompanied and confirmed by the working of marvels. It would profit us little if I culled a few flowers of miracle from the vast flower-gardens of Catholic history. It will be of more use if I briefly call attention to two recent able works in which the miracles which cling to the career of two great saints of the Church are dealt with in a sound and scientific spirit.

Dr. Edwin Abbott has published a masterly treatise on the life of Saint Thomas of Canterbury and the wonders which took place at his tomb. It is a precise and detailed summary of evidence. Of the conclusion of Dr. Abbott I can cite but a sentence or two.[1] "Many of the accounts of the life and death of Becket were written within five years of his martyrdom. Many of the miracles, certainly those recorded by their earliest chronicler, were written down at the very time of their occurrence. Yet even in these early documents we find that writers, speaking from 'veracious relation,' record portentous falsehoods, or let us rather say non-facts, and that even writers depending upon the evidence of eye-witnesses, and sometimes (though much more rarely) on the witness of their own eyes, fall into astonishing errors, many of which take the direction of such amplifications as to convert the wonderful but explicable into the miraculous and inexplicable."

The evidence collected by Dr. Abbott makes it abundantly clear that the martyrdom of Saint Thomas was followed by a remarkable series of events; it worked, in a fashion well worthy of the close attention of psychologists, upon the minds and bodies of that English race whose spiritual champion he was, with the result of curing diseases of many kinds, restoring spiritual and moral health, leading into a new and a higher path of life. But the evidence does not tend to show that the

[1] E. A. Abbott, *St. Thomas of Canterbury*, vol. ii. p. 308.

miracle-working power of Saint Thomas reached to the suspending of the physical laws of the world: rather, when tales of such suspension are set before us, it is often not difficult to see how they arose out of the confusion, very natural to the uneducated, between that which is within and that which is without, between man and nature.

The other critical history to which I made reference is the life of S. Francis, by M. Paul Sabatier. This biography shows with admirable perspicuity how in the course of the half century which followed the death of Francis his legend went on growing and changing, forming round itself a larger and larger halo of supernatural power and glory, and adapting itself to the fortunes of the Franciscan society. The life of Francis, written by three of his companions and published twenty years after his death, is singularly free from miraculous stories. But the life by Bonaventura, written twenty years later, with a special view to edification and the needs of the Franciscan order, is laden with miracle and with direct divine interventions, while under the stress of the supernatural the simple and beautiful personality of Francis becomes faint and obscure. The more he grows into the likeness of the typical saint, the less human and real does he become.

It is held by some that the experiments of modern spiritualism have tended to obliterate the line of distinction between the natural and the miraculous in the visible world—have shown that

spiritual forces may act directly on matter. And persons of sound judgment have thought that these experiments may compel us to revise our views as to the miracles of early Christianity. I do not like to speak of the phenomena of spiritualism, because there is much difference of opinion with regard to them, and in any case they are mingled with much absurdity and much imposture. But this is noteworthy, that according to spiritualists the power of working physical marvels has no close connection with moral or spiritual pre-eminence; it is attached to persons of a particular nervous organisation. If they are right, the working of miracles by Jesus would prove not His special calling nor His divine mission, but merely that He was a powerful medium. This is not unlike the view taken by the Master's opponents at the time. We fall back, not without relief, upon the position that the power of working miracles attributed to Jesus belongs not to history but to legend.

III

Before illustrating the growth of a halo of miracle about the person of the Founder of Christianity, it may be well to insist on two points: first, that the miracles proper attributed to Him are few, and second, that He expressly repudiated the position of a worker of miracles.

The impression, widely spread among Christians, that the whole life of their Master had a miraculous

setting, springs in a great degree from confusions. To begin with, it has been customary to confuse together the phenomena of faith-healing, in which there is nothing which transcends experience and miracle proper. As we have seen, people at an early stage of culture do not distinguish between that which is only remarkable and unusual, and that which is entirely contrary to recognised laws of nature: and this confusion has ever since prevailed in the minds of most Christians. But we are now obliged to distinguish. And while we are ready in general to accept tales of healing, we require in the case of miracles proper a clearness of testimony on which the miracles of the Gospels certainly do not rest.

In the Second Gospel, which is our most sober and unadorned record of the doings of Jesus, only four or five miracles are recorded. These are, the walking of Jesus on the sea, and His sudden stilling of the tempest; the feeding of the multitudes, twice repeated; and the withering of the barren fig-tree. If we add to these, from the First Gospel, the momentary success of Peter when he also attempted to walk on the sea, and a few cures which, as they are told us, seem quite beyond the borders of the natural, the list is almost complete. Each of these miracles falls easily into a well-known class of wonders. The walking on the sea is an example of the power which has in all ages and many countries been attributed to some remarkable men of rising from the ground and

standing without visible support. The story of the stilling of the tempest seems merely to be a slight exaggeration of a natural occurrence, especially considering that in small lakes like that of Galilee tempests rise and fall with extraordinary suddenness. The feeding of multitudes is a tale told of Elisha in the *Second Book of Kings*, and so is at least no new portent. And if it was generally recognised that Jesus cured diseases, it is evident that among a community which had made no exact study of disease, any tales of cures by their Master would find ready currency among Christians, even if the diseases were not really of a kind which would yield to faith.

That Jesus Himself repudiated alike the wish and the power to work miracles seems clear from sayings of His recorded by the Synoptic Writers. All three of them assert that when the Pharisees demanded of Him a miracle or sign, He replied, "There shall no sign be given to this generation." Mark adds that the demand sorely troubled Him, and it is clear, on comparing other passages, that what grieved Him was the seeking for a supernatural sign, when the spiritual signs of the times were visible to all who had eyes to read them. Matthew adds to the declaration of Jesus the phrase, "no sign shall be given but the sign of Jonah," and this addition, if authentic, would seem to mean that the token of divine authority which the Pharisees sought was to be found in the Master's preaching, which, like the preaching of

Jonah in Nineveh, was meant to save the people from destruction. Again, Matthew records that when the disciples of John the Baptist asked Jesus on their teacher's behalf for some sign, He pointed not to any miracle, but to the correspondence of His preaching with the words of Isaiah, and its effect in turning sinners to righteousness. It is easiest to take the rest of the reply of Jesus, "the dead are raised up, the lepers are cleansed," and the like, in a metaphorical manner, as referring to those diseased or dead in sin. If we were sure that we had the actual words of Jesus, this would be a point of some importance. But considering the circumstances of the production of this Gospel, we cannot be sure that the phrases are not altered by disciples; and very probably the Evangelist himself may have understood them as referring to signs and wonders of healing and exorcism.

If we compare the various accounts given by the Synoptic Writers of the same event, we may sometimes see the miraculous element growing under our eyes. In the passage just cited the preaching of Jonah is spoken of as a sign to the Jews.[1] "The men of Nineveh shall stand up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, a greater than Jonah is here." But into the midst of this statement the Evangelist, or an interpolator, has thrust a prophecy that as Jonah lay for three days and nights in the body of the sea monster, so

[1] Matthew xii. 39-41.

Jesus should lie for three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. A still clearer case of the intrusion of the miraculous will appear if we compare the directions for preparing the Last Supper in Matthew and in Mark.[1] Matthew writes, "He said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I keep the passover at thy house with my disciples." Here there is no marvel; no second sight. But Mark's version is, "He sendeth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him; and wheresoever he shall enter in, say to the goodman of the house," etc. We have here a most instructive glance into the minds of the early disciples, and see how a simple tale might grow under their hands.

That in spite of this love of marvel the Gospels should be, on the whole, so clear of miracle is remarkable; indeed, there is no trait which more strongly supports the general trustworthiness of the Synoptic narratives than the small part in them taken by tales of miracles, and their retention of the Master's repudiation of miracle-working. When we take up the gospels of a later date, such as those of St. Thomas and of the Infancy, we find them crowded from beginning to end with miracles, mostly of an exaggerated and tasteless kind. The universal rule holds also in this case; the nearer we approach the time of a really great teacher, the less important

[1] Matthew xxvi. 18; Mark xiv. 13.

and the less numerous are his miracles, the more emphasis is laid on his character and his words.

Though, in the second age of the Church, miracles were universally regarded as signs of the vocation of the Master, yet even then some of the more spiritually-minded of the Christian teachers saw that to rely unduly upon them was the way of materialism. The author of the interesting *Epistle to Diognetus*, written in the age of the Antonines, lays the stress of the evidence for the Incarnation not in miracle, but in the moral transformation visible in the lives of Christians. And Clement of Alexandria finds proof of the mission of Christ more surely in His character than either in the conformity of His life to prophecy or His power of working miracles. Down through the history of Christianity there have always been some, though in many ages few, who escaped the snare of giving a miraculous basis to the Christian claims.

Many theologians of ability in recent times have taken a view of New Testament miracles not unlike that of Clement. They have accepted those miracles as historic, but declared that they are not of great importance in an evidential aspect. Such a view, however natural and reasonable in the time of Clement, seems to me now to be out of date. If a belief in New Testament miracle be necessary to Christian faith, then there is at least a very serious reason for defending it if possible. But if it be not so necessary, it is most desirable to remove a stumbling-block out of the path of religion. To

us, whether miracles actually happened or not cannot be an otiose question. To all devoted to and trained in physical science it is a matter of the utmost importance. Miracles would form exceptions to that great law of the Conservation of Energy which men of science regard as holding in all parts of the physical universe. Christian teachers have no right to ask scientific men to give up their entire confidence in this law, except for most serious reasons. There are probably at this moment hundreds of serious thinkers who are repelled from the Christian Church because they think it committed to a belief in miracle. It is therefore clearly the duty of those who think that acceptance of physical miracle is unnecessary to Christian belief plainly to say so.

IV

Of far greater importance in the history of Christianity than any miracles wrought by the Founder are the miracles which are the setting of His birth and death, the miraculous divine birth, and the physical resurrection. For any one who studies the marvellous story of the rise of the Church it soon becomes clear that that rise was conditioned—perhaps was made possible—by the conviction that the Founder was not born, like other men, of an earthly father, and that His body did not rest like those of other men in the grave, but left it and ascended through the clouds to sit on the right

hand of God, thence one day to return for the judgment of the world.

These views of the birth and the death of the Founder have doubtless been regarded by successive generations of Christians as historic fact; and as historic fact they have constituted, as it were, an enduring skeleton to support a body of Christian doctrine. But by degrees, as the nature of fact and of history has been realised, in the slow evolution of thought, it has become clear that not thus can history be built up, and that the facts are facts of psychology rather than of the visible world.

Fact is allowed, and objective history is built up, on the ground of evidence and testimony. And it is quite clear to any one who will for a moment reflect that the evidence for the unusual circumstances of the birth is of the slightest possible character. Having elsewhere analysed it,[1] I may here spare myself the ungrateful task. The miraculous birth is not history but theory—one of the two competing theories which found course in the early Church, as ways of accounting for the life and the character of the Founder. The text of Matthew and Luke, at all events in its present condition, supports the view that one who came to be the Saviour and Redeemer of men could not be born of earthly parents, but must have come into the world in quite an exceptional way. This notion has been, as every anthropologist knows, current in all countries in regard to those who have come

[1] *Exploratio Evangelica*, chap. xix.

to civilise, to raise, and to help mankind. All primitive history is full of the deeds of sons of God dwelling among men, and by divine power helping them.

It is a fact little known to Christians in general, yet one which will clearly appear to all who read the Gospels with attention, that the story of the miraculous birth was not the only theory held by the very early Church to account for the divine nature of the Master; and it seems not to have been even the earliest theory. If we turn to the beginning of the Gospel of Mark, we find that he has nothing to say of any birth at Bethlehem, but speaks of the Founder consistently as of Nazareth, and as the son of Joseph and Mary. His account of his Master begins with the baptism by John; and he tells us how at that baptism the Spirit as a dove descended on Jesus, after which immediately He was driven by the Spirit into the wilderness. According to this version then it was at His baptism that Jesus received the divine Spirit, and not before His birth. In the same way the Fourth Evangelist does not recognise the miraculous birth, but appears to hold that the divine Spirit, the Word of God, was communicated to Jesus at His baptism. It is quite true that Matthew and Luke tell both of the miraculous birth and the descent of the Spirit at baptism, but in doing so they combine two inconsistent explanations of the same truth. For it is clear that if Jesus was filled with the divine Spirit from His mother's womb, there was no

need that that Spirit should come on Him at baptism.

The Fourth Evangelist and Paul hold baptism in great and mystic honour. The Evangelist says that men must be born again of water, as well as of the Spirit. Paul says that the followers of Christ are buried with Him in baptism. This view is explicable only on the supposition that the Spirit was given to believers as to their Master in baptism. This new birth they share with Him, that they may also share His life. In the early Church the two views which dated the divine origin of Christ, the one from His birth, the other from His baptism, were rivals. It was only by degrees that the former was established as orthodox, and the latter branded as heretical.

In fact both the tale of the miraculous birth and the tale of the miraculous baptism are early and somewhat crude attempts of the Christian Church to give embodiment to the great idea of the Incarnation. It was natural that these earliest efforts should take the form of ideal history. And it was necessary that they should be steeped in the hues of the supernatural. Before long, as we shall see, the same great idea gave rise to developments of doctrine which are better adapted for permanence, though even they contain elements of a temporary character. The majesty of this great idea can be compressed into no narrative, expressed by no miracle, and embodied in no formula.

The accounts contained in our Gospels of the

resurrection of the body of Jesus Christ stand in a somewhat different class from the accounts of the birth. The story of the birth is not expressly based on testimony; the story of the bodily resurrection is explicitly based upon the statements of eye-witnesses. In speaking of this matter we must carefully distinguish between the rising of the body of the Master and His continued presence among His disciples. That the spirit of Christ remained with His followers and dwelt among them we have an enormous volume of testimony. And to people of that country and that age, this spiritual presence would seem illusive unless the body also rose from the grave. It may be added that the relations of spirit and body remain altogether mysterious. And I suppose that if there were any sufficient consensus of tried testimony as to the appearance of Jesus after death to His disciples with tangible body, any one, even some of our most sceptical physicists and biologists, would be ready to accept that testimony, though we might all hold different views as to what facts were in reality guaranteed by it. Professor Huxley professed his willingness to accept any even apparently miraculous phenomenon, if it were guaranteed by adequate testimony; and most of us would admit such testimony with less difficulty than Mr. Huxley.

The great difficulty in regard to the physical resurrection arises from the unscientific frame of mind of the early disciples, who did not in the least under-

stand how to test or to value evidence, and who looked on the events of the visible world through a thick haze of preconceived notions, which made many simple occurrences seem to them vague and monstrous. It has been repeatedly shown by critics that the mass of testimony as to the physical appearances of Jesus Christ after the crucifixion is formless and full of inconsistencies. Some writers attempt by bold conjecture to bring order and consistency into it. To me it does not appear that any such proceeding has a reasonable chance of success. As matters stand, those who even now hold the views current in the early Church as to the necessity of a body to continued existence after death, will readily accept the belief in the resurrection of the body of Jesus. Many good Christians will, no doubt, also accept it on authority, although it does not fit easily into their scheme of the relations of body and spirit. But it seems to me that amid existing intellectual conditions, the wisest plan by far is to regard the spiritual presence of Christ in His Church as the essential fact, and the tales of the corporeal resurrection as results of the experience of Christians,—results moulded by the beliefs of the time as to the nature of spirit, and its relations to a material body. The view, often held, that it was in a changed and spiritual body that Jesus appeared to His followers—such a body as Paul speaks of in his *Corinthian Epistle*—is quite untenable. The one thing on which all the accounts insist is that the body of the Lord,

though it had miraculous powers, was yet the same material body which was crucified. It required food and drink for nourishment, and the wounds of the nails and the spear were yet unhealed. Luke even represents the risen Christ as saying, "a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold me having."

The fact is that the story of the resurrection, which has been discussed a thousand times from the point of view of the sceptic, the rationalist, the apologist, the system-maker, has never, so far as I am aware, been adequately discussed from the point of view of anthropology. We all, in the light of our established ways of thinking, are ready to say what must have happened, and to adapt the evidence to those views. But it does not seem to occur to any one to collect from historic records, the investigations of anthropologists, the experiments of the psychologist, all the events of a similar character which can be found, or to try to ascertain in what ways the human mind works under conditions like those of the first disciples. Until this complete inquiry has been made, all theories of the resurrection rest upon insufficient grounds—do not really acknowledge historic methods. From the scientific point of view, ingenuity and piety are both more likely to mislead a writer in search of historic fact than to guide him aright.

V

In sum, then, it appears that as in the matter of prophecy so in that of miracle, the intellectual conditions of the time largely moulded the historic narratives of the evangelists. In this case also, "Time, like a dome of many-coloured glass, stains the white radiance of eternity." And although it is not possible for us at once to cast aside the distorting medium and to see the pure light of fact behind, yet when we clearly see certain intellectual confusions and misconceptions to prevail in the minds of the sacred writers, or of those from whom they derived their materials, we must needs do what we can to save our own views from the results of these limitations. In the case of prophecy the main fault or confusion of the evangelists is that they regarded Jewish prophecy as referring to fact, and to fact of future time, instead of to tendency and to the ideal world. So in the case of miracle we find a deep-lying confusion, arising out of animistic theories of the visible world, which obliterated the distinction between power over the souls, and through the souls over the bodies of men, and power directly exercised over physical and inanimate nature. Seeing their Master cure disease, and drive out evil spirits, the disciples easily received such tales as that of the multiplication of the loaves and the cursing of the barren fig-tree. I do not say that the distinction between man and nature is

final, or that there is any inherent impossibility in the direct control of natural forces by human will. That would be unjustified dogmatism. I only say that the evidence that miracles proper were ever wrought by Jesus is evanescent, and that He seems expressly to have repudiated the intention of working such marvels. So also of the miracles which arose as a setting of the birth and the death of Jesus, we can only say that they appear to represent a hasty embodiment of the sacred experiences of the early Church in an external form—a form contributed by the beliefs universally current at the time, but now seen to possess subjective rather than objective validity.

The attitude of mind taken by the great mass of modern Christians towards the miraculous setting of their Founder's life is interesting, but scarcely, as I think, defensible. It seems that now miracles are not regarded, as they were in the last century, as an external proof of the divine nature of Jesus. But holding strongly to the divinity of their Master, Christians think that it makes the working of miracles by Him a thing natural and fully to be expected. If any one doubts the miracles, he is regarded as wishing to deny the divinity. I will cite the view set forth by Mr. Gore,[1] "Christ offers to all men a new life." "Himself a new man, He can make all things new. But granted that in this fundamental sense Christ Jesus is a new moral creation, is it possible that this new moral creation

[1] *Dissertations*, p. 66.

can have involved anything short of a new physical creative act?"

It is to be feared that Mr. Gore's theory introduces greater difficulties than it solves. His argument, if its principle be fairly applied, would render credible the miracles of the Gospels because Jesus was a new moral creation. Among these stands, for example, the multiplication of the loaves and fishes. But we find that a precisely similar miracle is recorded as having been wrought by Elisha.[1] Are we to regard this as an actual event or as legend? If legend, then why may not a similar tale when told of Jesus be legend also? If actual, then was Elisha as well as Jesus a "new moral creation?" Of course to our fathers Old Testament and New Testament miracle stood on the same basis; and in fact this is the only defensible view.

No doubt it was a strong feeling among the disciples that their Master was not as other men, which gave rise to the stories of miracles wrought by Him, and of a miraculous entry into the world. Such views at the time might well seem valid to the keenest intelligence. But the question remains, whether the progress of our knowledge of God's ways in the world has not now put it out of date. As a matter of fact, we do not find that the rise or renovation of the moral and spiritual life in a man alters his relations to the facts of the world about him. To this day, as we have seen, the people of India and of Africa think that it has such an effect;

[1] 2 *Kings* iv. 44.

but all the white races think that they are mistaken. Which are we to accept—a plausible notion deeply seated in the beliefs of the world, or the verdict of evidence and experience?

I must confess, with all humility, and all respect for those who think otherwise, that to me much of what is most characteristic in the life and teaching of Jesus would become unmeaning if He claimed to be a worker of miracles. By the exertion of miraculous powers He could undoubtedly have secured an external and visible triumph, instead of allowing His enemies to prevail. The Evangelists perceive this, and say that He did not exert His powers for fear the prophecies of the Scripture should not be fulfilled. This is their way of looking at things, but not their Master's. He came, not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him. He read the divine will not only in revelations from within, but in the law and order of the material universe and in history. When He was hungry, and the thought suggested itself, as we read, of making bread of stones, he rejected the suggestion as coming from the evil one. Wherein does the making of wine out of water differ from the making of bread out of stones?

Setting aside the distorting influences of the intellectual environment, we see with how strong a grasp the Evangelists held to some of the ideas which were to be the life of the future Church. The citation of prophecy is a result of the perception that the manifestation of the life of the spirit in all

ages is one—that it is a growth which gradually arises, a life which gradually spreads. They felt that Christ was born from the foundation of the world. They give to that profound and final conviction too literal a rendering; but it is a great thing that they really perceived it, and handed it on through the ages.

In the same way the attribution of physical miracle to the Master was the materialisation of a life-giving idea. The idea belongs to the Master; the disciples on a lower level accept it, and give it a body. Their real inspiration was the inwardness taught by their Master, the predominance in the world of the spiritual over the material, a predominance which is a postulate of the higher life, though it is not manifested in the rough and ready manner of a suspension by will of the laws of the material world. At the time, the Jews disputed the divine character of the miracles, attributing them to Satanic agency; and there every one would now allow that they were wrong. Probably the moderns, who on mere grounds of materialism have denied the possibility of miracles, are equally in the wrong. But among us and in our surroundings belief in the spiritual ground of life does not involve an acceptance of miracle; we clothe the idea in other forms. Not less sincere should be our gratitude to those who gave the idea a body suited to it at the beginning of the Christian era, and handed it down to us in spite of all opposition and of all persecution.

LECTURE VI

THE LOGOS DOCTRINE OF THE FOURTH EVANGELIST

WE have next to speak of the interpretation of the Master's person and work which took its rise among those of His followers who were less closely limited by the Jewish horizon. This interpretation is mainly due to three great theologians of the first century—Paul, the author of the Fourth Gospel, and the author of the *Epistle to the Hebrews*. Whether or not any of these writers had himself witnessed the earthly career of Jesus, it is quite certain that they were less under the influence of historic tradition than the Synoptic Writers. Christ after the Spirit, not Christ after the flesh, is the source of their inspiration. The wider and more permanent life of the Master in His Church dominates them rather than His miraculous power or His Messianic functions, or even His lofty spiritual teaching. In fact, in the hands of these writers the Christian message changed its character, and the Christian Church its standing-ground. When I use the word "change," I do not mean that they took up the

doctrine of a Hebrew prophet, and prepared it for being the basis of a world-religion. That has often been maintained, but it seems to me a superficial view. The thesis of Matthew Arnold, that Jesus stood so high above His immediate followers that they entirely misunderstood Him, is profoundly true. As we have seen, the Synoptic Writers, for all their candour, seem to have narrowed and materialised their Master, to have made Him more Jewish and more apocalyptic. No doubt as regards the teaching of Jesus, the Synoptic Writers are our most valuable authorities. But in regard to the bearing of His life and the secret of His personality, it is open to doubt whether Paul and the Fourth Evangelist may not have seen more of the truth than the Synoptists. There is nothing that blinds us to the loftier side of the personalities of men than a close and daily association with them. Over and over again in history it has happened that those who have had but little personal contact with a religious teacher have been most truly his spiritual children. Most blessed are those who have not seen, and yet have believed. Of course in thus speaking I assume that the author of the Fourth Gospel was not one who had close intercourse with Jesus, to which point I will return later.

I

It should be possible to set forth wherein mainly the three great theologians of early Christianity

differ from the more strictly Jewish school, and have a common likeness one to another. Their similarity lies in this, that each of them in his own way interprets the Founder of Christianity in the light of the permanent fundamental religious ideas of humanity.

At that time in Persia, in Egypt, in Greece, in Italy, the old tribal religions which had sufficed at all events for the public and official life of the nations when they stood apart in spiritual isolation, had been undermined by the cosmopolitan spirit which had arisen first in Greece, and had been propagated by the conquests of Alexander and his Roman successors through the civilised world. A process of comparison, of syncretism, had taken place, which had corrupted the vital force of these religions as expressions of tribal or national character. The city or the state had ceased to be the religious unit, and the individual with his religious needs, his hopes and aspirations, was more in the forefront of the world of belief.

Instead of thinking of themselves as fractions of a state or clan, men had grown more concerned with their own fates, alike in this world and that which is to come. The religions of Egypt and of Persia, which had led the way in fixing the pivot of faith in a world beyond the grave, gained wider acceptance. In Greece, which was after all the brain of the world, the trend of religious thought and feeling had taken two directions. The intellect had busied itself in religious speculation as

to the nature of God, of man, of morality; and philosophic religious systems, like those of the Stoics and the Epicureans, dominated the schools of Athens and Rome. The heart meanwhile, with its aspirations and needs, finding but cold comfort in philosophy, had turned towards the incoming religions. Sarapis, Mithras, Sabazius, were the deities who commended themselves to the enthusiastic. And in spite of the superstitions which accompanied the rites of these more mystic faiths, and the imposture which too often marked their priests and hierophants, at this distance of time we can see clearly that the change in the religious outlook was one betokening progress. The more enthusiastic cults preserved many religious ideas and feelings which had almost become atrophied in the respectability of the authorised national and civic cults. They recognised the main truths of eternal religion, the guilt of man, his need of a Saviour, the possibility of dying to the world and rising to a new life of the spirit, the hope of a life in God beyond the grave. If Christianity had been, as many people think it orthodox to suppose that it was, an entirely new departure, it is past calculation how much of the higher yearnings and strivings of successive generations in the pre-Christian age would have died away, and left no fruit on earth. But it was not thus in fact. The stream of Christianity had scarcely left its copious source in the divine mount, before it began to gather to itself all the streams

of religious thought and feeling which at the time had way among mankind. Many men must have found, to parallel the Pauline language, that Sarapis and Mithras acted as pedagogues to bring them to the school of Christ.

But we have not sounded the bottom of the religion of the thiasi and the mysteries in Greece. Individualism can in the long run be only transitional in religion. Purely individual faith dies with every generation; only as a common life inspires its members can any sect or community attain to continuous existence. So, though the enthusiastic religions of later Greece made their first appeal to the individual, his needs and his hopes, they met those needs and regulated those hopes by the teaching and practice of a common life. The deity worshipped by the thiasos was its bond of union, and through identification with that deity each member of the society hoped for a better life upon earth, and a safe passage to the realm of disembodied souls. For the tie of city and country, a different tie was substituted—a spiritual relation between the souls of men, based on communion with the divine. By a variety of ceremonies and sacraments this tie was recognised, and its binding force increased. Thus the Greek world showed a tendency to break up into spiritual units, rather than civic units such as the family and the city. The teaching of the Founder of Christianity as to the Kingdom of Heaven was indeed well fitted to blend with this tendency.

But the pagan cults might contribute to the Christian doctrine of the Communion of Saints something which we scarcely find, or at least do not find in developed form, in the writings of the Synoptists.

It is of course impossible that I should discuss in detail the phenomena of the mystic and enthusiastic religions of later Greece and Italy. But I was obliged hastily to characterise them, because I think we may formulate a sort of ratio. As the religion of the wide Hellenistic world was to the civic cults of early Greece and Asia, so was the religion of Paul and John to that of the Judaising Christians of the first century. The narrow Jewish wing of the Christians was little more than a Hebrew sect. It demanded of the Gentile converts that they should undergo circumcision, and keep the law. It looked upon Jesus Christ, even after all that had happened, as a national Jewish deliverer, who was to come again in the clouds of heaven in order to establish on earth the millennial reign of the saints. At the other pole of the Christian world, Paul and John abandon the racial for the cosmopolitan spirit, freely admit Gentiles, and regard Jesus Christ as a great spiritual power, briefly revealed to the world, but ever living at the right hand of God, the life of the Church, and the source of all its powers and virtues. They are the preachers of faith, of salvation, of mediation, of redemption. And the germs, at all events, of the beliefs which these

words imply may be traced in the writings and traditions, scanty and mutilated as they are, which tell us of the workings of the enthusiastic religions of the Hellenistic world.

For a fuller statement of this important fact I know not where to refer, save to a chapter in my *Exploratio Evangelica*,[1] where the parallelism between the mystic and soteriologic aspects of the later Paganism and of rising Christianity is drawn out as well as the existing materials have enabled me to depict it. The pagan mysteries aimed above all things at salvation, which they guaranteed to their votaries, alike in a blessed immortality hereafter, and in a new life on earth lived in a small society, which was under the special protection of the deity which it worshipped.

Some foreign critics have accused me of going beyond the evidence in comparing the tendencies of these religions with those of developing Christianity. And it must be allowed that our objective knowledge of them is not great, and constantly breaks down when one tries to build upon it. It must also be allowed that the cults of Mithras, of Cybele, and of Isis, have in them much to repel any person of moral sense. They were mingled with elements of indecency, of

[1] Chap. xxvi.: "Christianity and the Thiasi." This chapter perhaps more than any in the book contains an original contribution to the early history of Christianity. It is worthy of note that among all the English notices of the book not one appears to realise this fact; not one selects this chapter for comment, whether favourable or unfavourable.

extravagance, of imposture. The old-fashioned Romans held them in utter contempt, as tending to the dissolution of the family life and of society. Yet these held the same view of Christianity, and in fact confused Christianity with the new-fashioned and aggressive cults. It is noteworthy that at the present time the secret of the hatred felt by the Chinese and Japanese for Christianity is that they regard it as a solvent of the ties of family and clan, which in their view are the basis of all morality.

Let me explain my view more clearly. The great theologians of early Christianity, from a very different point of view, disliked and despised the cults of Hellenism as much as did the conservative Romans. They would be very unlikely to consciously copy them, regarding them as a result rather of diabolic than of divine inspiration. And yet I think the evidence shows that many of the ideas and beliefs which have in Christianity worked for the salvation of men, worked in these heathen cults at a very inferior level, and yet on the whole for good. Certain divine ideas found an unsatisfactory and corrupt body in some of the cults of later Greece before they found a nobler and more enduring body in the Christian society.

And it was the working of these ideas which made the great difference between the Pauline and Johannine writings and the Synoptic Gospels. By Paul and John the human life and the death of the Master are read in a higher light—the light

of His exaltation and spiritual pre-eminence. To them He was, not primarily the Messiah, nor the teacher of the way of life, but the hidden source of life, the saving power, the ruler of the spiritual world. To the narrower Judaic Christians Jesus succeeded and outshone the prophets, surpassing them as the son surpasses the mere servant. To the newer school Christ succeeded, and took the place of all the spiritual revelations which God had given to Jew and to Gentile, and so made a new and a living way whereby man could be saved, reconciled to God, and made even on earth a partaker of the divine nature.

It is natural, in view of the greater spirituality of this school of Christian teachers, and the more permanent conditions under which they worked, that in their theories of the person of their Master there should be less of the material, the temporary, the racial, than there was in the Synoptic writings. Nevertheless, if we consider their respective beliefs, we shall find that they also did not escape the limitations natural to the age and the country.

II

It is on the whole best to treat of the embodiment of these ideas in biography before we speak of their embodiment in doctrine. We will deal in the present lecture with the Fourth Gospel: in the next with the Pauline literature. Yet one must never forget that by this procedure we

reverse chronological order. The Pauline Epistles must be earlier by nearly half a century than the Fourth Gospel: they are indeed earlier than the Synoptic Gospels in their present form. Indeed, we may go further, and say that our present procedure in some degree puts the cause after the effect. The Fourth Gospel had its origin in Ephesus, in one of the churches founded and nurtured by Paul. It may fairly be said that, but for the work and the preaching of Paul, it could never have come into being. It assumes a change in the conception of the nature of Jesus Christ and of His relation to the Church, which, as we shall see, was mainly the result of Pauline influence.

It is often convenient to call the Fourth Gospel the Gospel of John, though in using the phrase I by no means intend to accept the view that this Gospel is from the pen of John the son of Zebedee. Its authorship is notoriously one of the most difficult and one of the most frequently discussed of New Testament problems. I can only express my own view in the matter. It is clear that the Gospel was written by a Christian of the second generation, a member of the Church of Ephesus, a man acquainted with the Platonic philosophy in its later form. As the Evangelist, in epistles almost certainly written by him, calls himself The Elder (ὁ πρεσβύτερος), there is much to be said for the view to which Harnack inclines, that he was a certain "John the Elder" of Ephesus, mentioned by Papias. If John the Elder, being a disciple of John son of Zebedee,

wrote the Gospel, its attribution to the Apostle would be quite natural. In my opinion this view at present holds the field. The usual view of conservative critics, that the Gospel as it stands was written by the Apostle John, not only labours under the greatest critical difficulties, but it is even more on the side of scepticism than others. For if the Gospel of Mark and the Gospel of John are both the records of eye-witnesses, then it becomes wholly impossible to determine what the life and teaching of Jesus were really like: for we have two utterly irreconcilable accounts of it of equal authority.

For our present purposes it is unnecessary to discuss in detail the authorship of the Fourth Gospel. For we have to do, not with the author of the book, but with the book itself. And the book, when looked at with the eyes of historic and literary criticism, tells us all that we need in the present place to know in regard to it. It is clearly made up of two distinct elements. In the first place it appears almost certain that the author had at his disposal detailed traditions or records of some parts of the life of Jesus. In some passages—that which records the events of the last supper, for example—his sources of information seem to be more accurate than those of the Synoptists. And the mention of people and places sometimes seems to show precise local knowledge, as when he speaks of "Aenon near to Salim," and when he records the events by the pool of Bethesda, and the doings of Nathanael and Nicodemus. Such detailed knowledge may

well have come from one of the Apostles, very likely from John son of Zebedee. But this knowledge of some events in the life of Jesus is entirely dominated by the second element in the Gospel—an intense feeling of the exalted nature of Jesus Christ, which appears to be based not so much upon any tradition of His life and sayings as on experience of His relations to the Christian community after He had departed from earth.

The Synoptic Writers on the whole faithfully reflect the teaching of the historic Jesus. "Do the will of God and you will be blessed: love God, and in God all mankind." The Fourth Gospel seems to embody the response made by the spirit of the Master to the complaint of the Church, "Without Thee we have no strength to do the will of God; through Thee alone can we love God." That the promises of the risen Christ should be embodied in words attributed to the historic Jesus Himself is quite contrary to all modern notions of the duty of a biographer. But there is nothing in it contrary to the literary habits of the time. And, as we shall presently see, it can be proved beyond all possibility of reasonable doubt that the discourses of the Fourth Gospel are compositions of the writer of the Gospel, though they are inspired by Christian experience.

In some passages of the Synoptic Writers we find an echo of the intense conviction of the early disciples that their Master, though lost to sight, still in exalted spiritual being dwelt among them, and guided the infant society. But this conviction,

which only colours isolated passages in the Synoptic Gospels, exercises in the Fourth Gospel an enormous transforming power, colouring most of the words attributed to Jesus. Parts of the traditional teaching which could not be read in this light, or thus transformed, do take a place in the Fourth Gospel; but its whole colour and tendency come from the utterances in which the person of the Master is more conspicuous than His teaching, and His relation to His Church overshadows His Messiahship.

I have already observed that the acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah, and the application to Him of Messianic prophecy, was the tribute paid by the first followers of Jesus to the idea of the continuity of history—was the outcome of their conviction that Jesus Christ was not a new creation; but one prepared by all the course of Jewish history, the crown of the long spiritual life of Israel. The Fourth Evangelist does not give up the Messianic belief, but he practically supersedes it with the Logos doctrine, of which I shall presently speak, which has over it the great advantage that it attributes to the risen Christ a great power and function in the spiritual world, and at the same time does not, like the Messianic idea, omit the Gentiles from account. For the word of God came not only to Jewish prophets, but also to Greek saints and sages.

It is impossible for any one who has received literary and historic training to accept the view that the Synoptic and the Johannine discourses came

from the same lips. If we suppose that the teaching recorded in Matthew and Luke really comes from the Founder of Christianity, then we are obliged to maintain that the discourses of the Fourth Gospel, though the theme of them may sometimes be an authentic saying of the Master, are yet composed in a style widely different from his. And that style is precisely the manner of the Evangelist himself, as shown in his Epistles, and in his explanations in the Gospel itself. To make this clear we will begin with an examination of a speech given in the Fourth Gospel to John the Baptist. It is sufficiently obvious that it is most unlikely that speeches of the Baptist should be correctly transmitted from mouth to mouth for seventy or eighty years until they reached the Evangelist. And this probability becomes a certainty when we turn to the phrasing of the speech itself in John iii. Here we find every indication of a dramatic composition arranged on a set theme. At v. 26 we have the occasion: John's disciples doubt as to the mission of Jesus, and so give John an opportunity of speaking on the subject. He begins, with complete verisimilitude, with a statement that he regards Jesus as the greater teacher for whom he can only prepare the way. "He must increase," says the Baptist, "but I must decrease." So far there is no difficulty: if John did not say these things, he well might have said them. But at v. 31 we find what purports to be a continuation of his speech. It begins, "He that cometh from above is above all," and goes on to set

forth in the regular style of the Fourth Gospel some of the tenets especially dear to the author. John the Baptist preaches in the style quite peculiar to the Fourth Evangelist! So obvious an incongruity could not escape the critics, who try in various ways to explain it. Surely there is one explanation, and one only, which is reasonable—that the Evangelist composes speeches for his characters, and sometimes is so far carried away as to forget to make those speeches appropriate. He passes unconsciously from narrative to preaching.

As I have pointed out elsewhere, scarcely any writer is free from such inconsistency as this, not even Shakespeare himself, who in the *Merchant of Venice* most inappropriately places in the mouth of Portia, pleading in a law court, that charming panegyric of mercy, beginning, "The quality of mercy is not strained, It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven, Upon the place beneath." In itself this praise of mercy is beautiful, but as an appeal to Shylock it lacks all propriety, especially as it ends with a reference to the Lord's Prayer. Even Shakespeare is sometimes led away from dramatic propriety, when he is embarked on a passage which will certainly appeal to, and carry away, his audience.

And as the Fourth Evangelist composes speeches for John the Baptist and for Jewish opponents, so he composes them for his Master also. Admirable as is the beauty, and perfect as is the spirituality, of the discourses attributed to Jesus

in the Fourth Gospel, it is quite impossible to suppose that in this form they came from His lips. What the teaching of the Master really was like we may fairly judge from the fragments of it piled together in the Sermon on the Mount, or the parables of the kingdom. Short pithy sayings, precepts dictated by authority, tales bearing an obvious moral,—such was the Master's discourse. But the speeches given in the Fourth Gospel are in character utterly different. I speak now of their form and style, not of their contents. They are in fact brief sermons. Starting usually with some remarkable and pregnant saying, they dwell upon it, explain it, turn it about. Very generally some interlocutor is introduced, who misunderstands the text by taking it literally and not spiritually; and this gives occasion to the speaker more clearly to bring out its force. All this shows a thoroughly artificial construction on a set plan.

No better example can be taken of the method of constructing the Johannine discourses than the discourse with Nicodemus. First we have the occasion. Nicodemus comes by night to consult Jesus as a teacher sent from God. The teacher at once opens with a sublime paradox, "Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Whether this phrase is likely to have come from the Founder of Christianity it is not easy to determine. It is one of those grand spiritual truths to which He often gives utterance; and in Matthew we have a parallel in the words,

"Except ye turn and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven." But, on the other hand, the particular word *reborn* is closely associated with the mystic religion of the time, would certainly be current at Ephesus, and is more akin to the teaching of the Fourth Evangelist than to that of his Master. One would say that the difference between "become as little children" and "be born anew" exactly expresses the difference in view between the Jesus of the Synoptics and the Jesus of the Fourth Gospel. Nicodemus, however, at once supposes that some physical second birth is intended, "Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb"? Such crassness is scarcely in human nature; the reply is merely a rhetorical artifice, to give occasion for explanation. In fact this artifice is constantly used by the Evangelist, as we see by a dozen other passages. The Samaritan woman, when she hears of "living water," says, "Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?" When Jesus speaks of giving His flesh for the life of the world, the Jews murmur, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" Every reader of Plato will remember how in similar fashion those who oppose Socrates by their very objections give him opportunity more clearly to bring out his meaning.

In the conversation with Nicodemus, the explanation called for comes at once, partly in the form of another noble statement of law, "That

which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." The severe antithetic style of this saying belongs to the Evangelist; but the words take us at once to the doctrine of Paul, with whom the contrast of flesh and spirit is a primary subject of teaching. The next words seem to belong to the author of the Gospel. "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." The stress here laid on baptism is quite without precedent in the Synoptic Gospels. It is indeed very doubtful whether baptism was a custom of the infant Christian society until after the Crucifixion. But the Fourth Evangelist, dating the divine mission of Jesus from His baptism by John, attaches very great importance to the rite, though he states in another place that "Jesus Himself baptized not, but His disciples."

To return to Nicodemus. At this point of the discussion, he does not express misunderstanding but incredulity, "How can these things be?" The immediate reply of Jesus, "Art thou the teacher of Israel, and understandest not these things," has many parallels in the Synoptic Gospels, for instance, "Can ye not discern the signs of the times?" But at that point we begin to drift further and further from the authentic. The Master proceeds, "If I told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you heavenly things?" It will be observed how at this point the *Thou*, natural in discourse be-

tween two, gives way to the plural *Ye*. Nicodemus is passing into the background, and the occasion of the discourse is being forgotten. The contrast of earthly things with heavenly is entirely in the manner of Jesus, and reminds us of such saying as, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is heaven give good things to them that ask Him?" But although in itself the saying may well be authentic it is not suited to this connection, for the new birth is exactly the sort of event which Jesus usually speaks of as heavenly, as having to do with the "kingdom of heaven."

After this the occasion and the interlocutor pass out of the mind of the Evangelist, and he proceeds as if he were preaching in the synagogue, beginning, "No man hath ascended into heaven, but he that descended out of heaven, even the Son of man, which is in heaven," where all except the expression, "Son of man," belongs to Jesus Christ looked back on by the Church, and present to the experience of Christians, but not to the Jesus known to us from the Synoptic Writings.

To any one at all accustomed to the ways of ancient historians the notion that Nicodemus would go, like a modern newspaper reporter, to set down on paper the discourse which he had heard, seems fanciful. It was the custom of all the historians in Greece and Rome to tell their tale partly by a narrative of events, partly by composing for their

principal characters speeches which should more clearly than a narrative explain the position of affairs, and characterise a situation. The speeches which abound in Thucydides, Tacitus, Livy, are not verbatim reports, are not in most cases the substance of what was uttered by the persons in whose names they are given, but usually compositions of the historians, framed with dramatic propriety. The speeches of Socrates as given in the dialogues of Plato are no records of actual words. Though they doubtless at once follow and idealise Socrates' habits in discourse, yet many of the views put forward in them, the doctrine of ideas for example, are probably quite foreign to the teaching of Socrates, and belong to Plato himself. It would not appear to Plato that in thus attributing the advocacy of his own views to Socrates, he was doing his master any injustice. He would doubtless consider his procedure a compliment to that master, and a mark of sincere gratitude. And in spite of literary customs, which from the modern and historic point of view could scarcely be reckoned as right, most critics of ancient philosophy have thought that in some respects Socrates is more satisfactorily mirrored in the dialogues of Plato than in the less intellectual and less imaginative pages of the *Memorabilia* of Xenophon. A painted portrait, even if the drawing be incorrect, may give one a better notion of the person depicted than a matter-of-fact photograph.

It is sometimes contended in conservative circles,

and even Matthew Arnold has accepted the contention, that the discourses of the Fourth Gospel cannot be the work of the Evangelist, because he was incapable of producing them, and because they contain teaching so original and so lofty that it must go back to Jesus Himself. This is distinctly an *apriori* view. How do we know of what the Evangelist under divine inspiration may have been capable? Should we not, judging in the same *apriori* manner, decide that some Pauline passages, such as the praise of charity, could not be the work of a mere disciple, but must go back to the Master? When we look closely into the teaching of the Johannine discourses we see clearly that, on the contrary, much of it could not have come from the earthly Jesus, and that much of it is strongly influenced by Paul. For example, the Johannine parable of the vine and the branches contains the same teaching as the Pauline parable of the body and the members. There is nothing corresponding in the Synoptists; and the Pauline version is the original. If the Johannine Christ speaks of Himself as "the Way," we may find in the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, which is probably earlier in date, a passage in which Christ is spoken of as a "new and living way." Probably the stately beauty of style in the Johannine discourses impresses on many readers the conviction that they are reading the very words of Jesus; but there is no question whatever that this style belongs wholly to the Evangelist himself.

III

In so spiritual a work as the Fourth Gospel, we may seem to have reached the very essence of Christianity as understood in the Christian community, and to have passed beyond materialism and that which is temporary. And no doubt the ideas which inspire the Evangelist are central in Christianity. But in giving them a body in his Gospel, the Evangelist is not always lifted above that which belonged to the time, and must with time decay. To begin with, as a biographer, using for the biography passages selected from the Christian tradition, he cannot wholly free himself from the limitations which we have observed as controlling the Synoptic Writers. Sometimes he dwells on a literal fulfilment of prophecy with the same insistence as they. An instance already cited, in which the distribution of the clothes of Jesus is made literally to conform to the words of the prophet, is from the Fourth Gospel. This Evangelist is in general above materialism, so that such phrases as, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed," seem naturally to belong to him. And yet he insists even more strongly than other Evangelists on the value of the mighty works of Jesus as a testimony to the truth of His mission. He even puts into the mouth of Jesus the strong phrase, "If I had not done among them the works which none other did, they had not had sin," which contrasts with the saying in the Synoptists, "There

shall no sign be given to this generation." He recounts miracles of Jesus, few in number, but strongly marked in character. He is not able fully to recognise, like the author of the *Epistle to Diognetus* and Clement of Alexandria, that the character and teaching of Jesus are better proofs of His mission than any miracle could be. We must make allowance in his case also for the stress of controversy and practical necessity.

It seems a very simple and natural supposition that the elements in the Gospel, which seem at variance with the character of its author, should be due to the apostolic authority from whom he accepted many of the narratives embodied in the Gospel, and to whom no doubt he looked up with reverence, as one who had been a companion of his Master. I have already suggested that this authority may be John the son of Zebedee, who, as he comes before us in the Gospels, is a character frank, warm-hearted, and affectionate, but decidedly limited, passionate, by no means especially spiritual. If it was, as seems very possible, he who compiled the *Apocalypse*, he was one of the narrow and Judaic party among the early Christians. If, then, we accept the view that the author of the Fourth Gospel was not an eye-witness, but had behind him oral testimony of John the son of Zebedee, it is naturally to this Apostle that we shall refer his occasional materialism.

On the other hand, in some respects the Evangelist is strikingly on the side of the modern world

against the limitations of his age. It is notable that whereas the demonology of the time colours almost every page of the Synoptists, and even Jesus Himself seems to have accepted it, the Fourth Evangelist says nothing about dæmonic possession or the exorcism of evil spirits. If we compare the writings of many early Christian teachers, which are steeped in demonology, this may well seem a remarkable fact. In itself it is an almost irresistible proof how loose he sat to historic tradition when it did not accord with what commended itself to him as a higher view.

We pass from the defects, or what historic students would regard as defects, in the Fourth Evangelist considered as a biographer, to certain weaknesses which seem to be inseparable from the position which he takes up as a philosopher. In Platonising, he necessarily inherits the defects as well as the admirable virtues of the Platonic manner of thought. And we must remember that it is not from the great philospher himself that he would take the elements of Platonic thought, but from disciples of less genius, from the speculations of later Greeks or of Hellenistic Jews.

To this Evangelist his Master appears as an embodiment or an incarnation of the Logos or reason of God and of the divine light which shines into every man born into the earth. It would indeed be hopeless to attempt in this place even a sketch of the history in pre-Christian religious thought of these phrases. The Logos doctrine,

whatever its origin, is essentially Greek. The Greeks sought after wisdom, were the discoverers of philosophy and of all scientific thought, first taught mankind the higher uses of the intellect. But the doctrine of the divine light goes back to another mental atmosphere, that of Persia, where light rather than thought was regarded as the most express mirror of the Deity.

Although the Logos doctrine appears first in fully developed form in the Fourth Gospel, yet in earlier writings we may find approximations to it. Paul in this as in many matters prepared the way for the Evangelist. In *Romans* (x. 6) he writes, "The righteousness which is of faith saith thus, Say not in thy heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down:), or, Who shall descend into the abyss? (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart." Here, although the noun rendered "word" is *rema* and not *logos*, yet Paul seems within a step of speaking of Christ as the Word of God. And the step which Paul does not take is actually taken by the writer of the *Apocalypse*, when he speaks of the rider on the white horse, who is arrayed in a garment sprinkled with blood; and whose name is The Word of God.

The great benefit which came to the Church from the adoption by Christianity of the doctrines of the Logos and the divine light, is that it removed from the Christian thought as to the person of the Master the limitations of time and of space,

and recognised it in relations of the loftiest and most ideal kind with God and with the world. The place of birth, which in regard to the Jewish Messiah was important, became in regard to the Christ unimportant, since He was born from the foundation of the world, and was present wherever God was revealed to man and in man. The "Christ in you" of Paul takes the place of the Christ born at Bethlehem of Matthew and Luke. Death, which seemed to remove the Messiah to a distant sphere, whence He should come again to judge the world, could not quench the light that enlightens every man who comes into the world. Thus it became possible for thoughful Christians to use language such as is used by Justin Martyr in the middle of the second century, "Lest some should without reason, and for the perversion of what we teach, maintain that we say that Christ was born one hundred and fifty years ago, under Quirinius, and subsequently, in the time of Pontius Pilate, taught what we say He taught; and should cry out against us as though all men who were born before Him were irresponsible, let us anticipate and solve the difficulty. We have been taught that Christ is the first-born of God, and we have declared above that He is the Word of whom every race of men were partakers; and those who lived with reason (μετὰ λόγου) are Christians, even though they have been thought atheists; as, among the Greeks, Socrates and Heraclitus, and men like them; and among the barbarians, Abraham

and Ananias, and Azarias and Misael, and Elias, and many others whose actions and names we now decline to recount, because we know it would be tedious. So that also they who lived before Christ, and lived without reason, were wicked and hostile to Christ, and slew those who lived reasonably."[1]

This is indeed a remarkable passage, and brings out clearly the liberal and broad religious spirit which naturally goes with the doctrine of the Logos. But it also throws into clear relief what is the weak side of that doctrine, and indeed of all the speculation of the school of Alexandria which arose out of it. Both reason and light belong rather to the intelligent than to the volitional side of our nature. If Jesus Christ was the embodiment of the reason or light of God, His mission to the world would have been mainly intellectual, as Justin evidently thinks. In this way we make Jesus Christ a philosopher — a pattern to the world of wisdom rather than of will in union with the divine. And this brings us into collision not merely with history, but with the primary laws of the spiritual word. For we find, alike from experience and from the enlarged experience which history offers us, that divine inspiration does not save those who are inspired from the necessity of ascertaining the truth in regard to visible and material things by the ordinary methods of investigation, or from the

[1] *First Apology*, chap. lxvi.

necessity of recovering the history of the past by means of document and testimony. In the first ages of Christianity, psychology was in its infancy, and it was quite natural that no clear distinction should be drawn between the inspiration which leads men to fulfil the law of their being, the wisdom which enables them to choose the right path for the attainment of high ends, and the knowledge which gives power among men. It is quite natural that the abyss between knowing what was right and doing it should be glossed over, as it was in all schools of Platonic thought.

These original weaknesses have had and still have unsatisfactory results in the history of Christian doctrine. Since it seems to follow that he who embodies the wisdom and the light of God must be in knowledge infallible, it seems even now to many Christians a stumbling-block that Jesus should cite as by David a Psalm which belongs to a much later date than that of David, or that He should ascribe disease to the presence of evil spirits. Next, the absence of infallible knowledge in the teaching of Jesus as reported in the Synoptists being undeniable, theologians have been led to extend in a particular direction Paul's doctrine of the *kenosis*, holding that in coming into the world the divine Word emptied Himself of the divine knowledge in order to submit to human conditions. This doctrine, like most Christian doctrines, may have justification in some aspects, but it may be questioned whether it is not based on an unsound

psychology, and whether it does not contribute to producing that artifical and non-natural complexion of religion which estranges from it those men who are determined as far as possible to see things as they really are. It is often an unfortunate result of introducing a theological doctrine, which in itself seems free from objection, that it entices men to make it complete from the theoretical point of view, and so it drags in after it as corollaries other doctrines which may present greater difficulty from the psychologic or scientific point of view.

Another corollary of the Logos doctrine, which has had wide influence in theological construction, must here be mentioned—the doctrine of the agency of Christ in the formation of the material world. When early religious thought, at the time of the rise of Greek civilisation, had begun to occupy itself with the relation between the creating Deity and the world, an Ionian philosopher had summed up that relation in the phrase, "All things were in confusion; reason ordered them." At a period possibly even earlier than this, Jewish thought in one of its noblest flights had pictured wisdom or reason as associated with the Creator, "When He prepared the heavens, I was there: when He set a compass upon the face of the depth: when He established the clouds above: when He strengthened the fountains of the deep: when He gave to the sea His decree, that the waters should not pass His commandment: when He appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by Him, as a master

workman (R. V.): and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him."[1] It can scarcely be wondered that the Wisdom thus delightfully spoken of in the *Book of Proverbs* became in later Jewish writing more and more personal. And so the Jesus Christ, who was the Word of God, was inevitably regarded as one with the personified Wisdom which had guided the Creator in His planning of the worlds. The inconsistency between this view and the sternly monotheistic language of the account of creation in Genesis was scarcely of a character to disturb the early Christian theologians. Introduced into the Creeds it might well have been a considerable source of confusion. And yet we may discern that truth was built into its foundation—a truth which it does not seem impossible to translate into the language of the most modern schools of thought, and to commend to an age which has accepted evolution as a condition not merely of the physical world, and the world of biology, but also of the human world.

To the thought of the time it was quite natural to assert that Jesus Christ, as the divine Word, was the agent or vicegerent through whom this visible world of ours was made out of the primitive chaos, and endowed with animal and vegetable life. Those who supposed the world to have been set up all at once like a castle in the bosom of the void might easily carry their anthropomorphic view

[1] *Proverbs* viii. 27.

a step further, and imagine Jesus Christ as its architect. But wherever evolutionary views of creation prevail, the ground is cut from under such fancies. If, however, we regard Jesus Christ, the embodiment of ideal humanity, not as the architect of the world, but as its final cause,—that to which it leads up, and which it realises in the slow course of history,—then we have a doctrine as well suited to modern as to ancient conditions. To all save those who regard as satisfactory a merely mechanical and materialist view of the world, man must seem the crown and consummation of it all; and the ideal and spiritual man, the citizen of the kingdom of God, must be the crown of mankind. They will place the Word, not at the temporal beginning of the world, but in the realm of the ideal, as representing the purpose which the Creator is gradually working out in the world which He is still occupied in making.

There is another phrase used by the Fourth Evangelist at the beginning of his work, "In Him was life"; and here we have no criticism to make. For the life which began with the Founder has gone on from that day to this—a life into which have been absorbed the desires and aspirations and energies of thousands of the greatest and best men who have ever lived. Christianity is indeed far better thought of as a life than either as reason or as light. And when we turn from the proem of the Fourth Gospel to the wonderful discourses

contained in it, we see that after all the Platonic culture of the writer was not very thick, and that beneath it he bore a truly Christian heart. In those discourses Christ is set forth under many forms, as the way, the truth, the door, the bread of life, the stem of the vine, but always with reference not to intellectual illumination, but with reference to fact, to experience, and to life. If the Fourth Evangelist Platonizes in his own person, he scarcely represents his Master as Platonizing, but rather as speaking the language of profound and essential religion, coloured by the new revelation which was dawning on the world.

IV

Thus, however much justice there may be in our criticisms, the fact remains that the Evangelist did for the infant Church an inestimable service in giving a new embodiment to the idea of the incarnation—an embodiment historic and yet not narrowly historic—one destined to be of enormous value in the thought of the Church of the early centuries of Christianity. No one who does not want to rob his own soul of a great treasure will be willing on critical grounds to neglect or depreciate the glorious store of spiritual truth to be found in the Fourth Gospel. If we regard the Gospel with the eyes not of grudging criticism but of generous appreciation and gratitude, the defects we have found in the author will seem but as spots in the sun. He

dwelt among the deep secrets of God, the profound realities of the Christian experience, and has embodied them in a form which, even if imperfect, has been for eighteen hundred years the treasure of devout souls, the spring of many a noble life, the promoter of the sacred communion between God and man. He has baptized into Christ some of the profoundest beliefs of universal religion, and brought them into the theology of the Christian Church. The first, and probably the greatest of Christian mystics, he has enriched for all time the blood of Christianity with elements without which it would have been comparatively thin and poor.

The thing most necessary to remember, in order that we may do justice to the Gospels, is the entire change which has come over the civilised world since they were written, in regard to the writing of histories and biographies. As in art so in literature, the last word of the ancient world was idealism, the last word of the modern world is realism. Partly it is the result of our great and increasing reverence for fact which has grown up with the growth of physical and biological science. Partly, it may be the result of our familiarity with photography and other mechanical ways of representing the world about us. Whatever may be the cause, it is certain that we expect in a modern historian a respect for proved fact, a carefulness in weighing evidence, an objectivity of view, which was not required in the ancient, nor indeed in the mediæval world. A modern writer may attempt to

give form to his beliefs and experiences in a novel or tale, but we do not think it legitimate that he should embody them in a history or a biography. It is his business, if he can, to see the inner meaning and connections of events in the past. But he must not, in order to make clear such meaning, bend that framework of facts received on testimony which is the skeleton of history as understood by us moderns. But take the *Lives* of Plutarch, one of the most admirable and high-minded writers of antiquity. Here we are frankly in the realm of the ideal. Personages, mythical and historical, stand side by side as a gallery of characters or rather of types. Plutarch uses historical materials, memoirs and the like, but he picks and chooses with a view to a result. He is less rhetorical than many ancient writers; he does not usually, like Thucydides, introduce speeches to characterise the position of affairs, but his biographies are dominated by a fine ethical spirit, to which they owe their stimulating effect.

A modern reader, and especially a reader who has not had a classical education, does not find it easy to bring back his mind to the ancient point of view. A book which is published in the name of another, very likely out of pure modesty, he is apt to regard as a forgery. A speech put into the mouth of a personage, in order to illustrate his supposed views and character, is liable to be reckoned a falsehood. The transference, on literary grounds, of a remark from one set of circumstances

to another seems indefensible. Thus until the spirit of carping criticism is generally superseded by the true historic spirit which judges a writer by his own standards and in the light of the purposes which he has set before him, I fear that the historic parts of the New Testament may greatly suffer in general estimation. The plain man may hold that they either correspond to facts and are true, or do not correspond to facts and are false, not understanding that by such rigid and superficial criticism he will rule out of court almost all of ancient and much of modern history.

"We live by admiration and by love," not by criticism. Yet to criticism our age is given, and the tendency reaches those whose education is very imperfect. And the perception of defects which one had not expected in a book often for the time thwarts one's admiration for it, just as a mote in the eye may prevent a man from admiring the finest landscape. Therefore it is for us of the present day fortunate that most of the ideas which by the Evangelists are embodied in an ideal biography are by St. Paul set forth not in history but in doctrine, translated not into the tense of the past, but boldly into that of the ideal.

LECTURE VII

THE CHRISTIANITY OF ST. PAUL

In the last lecture I tried to show how the broader and more mystic view of Christianity which sprang up after the Crucifixion, especially among those who had not seen and yet believed, acted in the remoulding of the life of the Master in the light of the experience of the Church. The result was the combination, through the continual working of the Christian spirit, of Jewish and Hellenic religion. A new and vigorous tributary stream had come in to alter the course of the Jewish Christian current. But the Greeks were to have in another direction —the direction of doctrine—a still larger share in the shaping of Christianity. And the true road for the Greek spirit was, by a strange practical paradox, struck out first by a Hebrew of the Hebrews, a Pharisee and the son of a Pharisee, who from his youth up had been a zealous follower of the Jewish law, and who hated Christianity principally, it would seem, because it appeared to be the enemy of the law—an anti-national movement, leading to an apostacy of Israel. Strange as

this sounds, the wonderful history of the Jewish race provides us with several parallel instances.

The extant letters of Paul are of an earlier date than the Synoptic Gospels, but he yet represents a more highly developed phase of Christianity than they, mainly no doubt because he had not seen and yet believed. So marked indeed is the contrast between the very early date of Epistles like those to the Romans, Galatians, and Ephesians, which are attributed to the fifties and sixties of the first century, and the highly developed scheme of Christian doctrine which they embody, that a school of theologians has in recent years arisen in Holland who maintain all the Pauline Epistles to be of later date, and to come from the hands of disciples of Paul rather than from his own. This is an inevitable phase of criticism, but it is yet an aberration, rejected by all the sound and sober schools of theology. The substantial genuineness of the four great Pauline Epistles—those to the Romans, Corinthians, and Galatians—is almost beyond dispute, and few critics now reject the claims of most of the rest to authenticity. Even the Epistles to Timothy and Titus are regarded as containing passages which are from Paul's hand, though worked up with matter of a later date.

I

By every student of the New Testament it must be sometimes felt as a relief to turn from the

memorials of Jesus in the Gospels to the writings of Paul. Of the Founder one continually feels that He is high, unattainable. Our panting thought and aspiration toils upwards, but never attains the high mountain peaks where He abides for ever. One gains a glimpse here, a hope there, but one can never see the Son of Man standing forth in full image. When we come to Paul, we are at once on a human plane. Perhaps there is no character in all ancient history, unless it be Cicero, who is so well known to us in his weakness and his strength, who appeals so directly to our hearts and intellects, as Paul. In every page of his letters we feel the pulse of the man; we share his experiences and sympathise with his aspirations; we feel not only boundless admiration for his manliness, his unselfishness, his talents, but also love for his noble humanity. It is strange indeed that any school or any church should destroy the character of his writings by raising them to the dead level of infallibility. It is like covering up the beautiful Gothic tracery of a cathedral with a thick layer of vulgar whitewash. It is true that Paul does sometimes claim a right to speak in his Master's name, inspired by the spirit of Christ. But usually he speaks in his own name, as a man, as Paul the Aged, as the teacher and father of his converts—even sometimes, as he touchingly says, as one of the foolish. If the Pauline writings, on the one hand, go deep into the essential facts of religion and touch the springs of the life of the spirit, in their expression they are,

on the other hand, full of the temporal and personal, of rabbinical learning, of private views in science and psychology, of the tinge of personal affection or indignation. Paul was no more infallible than Augustine, or than his great antitype in the modern world, Luther, or than John Wesley, all of whom drew from the same wells as Paul, and walked in the same strength. Paul has had the greater effect on the world because he came first and at a more decisive crisis. He is the highest mountain of the chain, but there are a dozen other summits which soar with him into heaven, and hundreds of smaller hills of the same geological character and general formation.

It is a cardinal principle that in speaking of Paul we must judge him from his own writings and not from what we are told about him in the *Acts*. It is true that some of the missionary journeys of Paul are well reported in the *Acts*, more especially in that part of the narrative where the word "we" constantly recurs, and the facts of which are probably gathered from one of his companions. But in many ways the picture of the Apostle as given in the *Acts* differs from that which we derive from the Epistles, and when this is the case we cannot hesitate which of the two accounts we should prefer. In particular the story of the sudden and complete conversion of Paul, of which we have three varying accounts in the *Acts*, though it may probably have some basis of fact, is yet no doubt misleading. When Paul speaks in his Epistles of his own con-

version, he tells us that he was a persecutor of the Christian society, but when it pleased God to reveal His Son in him, he was entirely changed. The great change was inward, perhaps gradual, and though it may well have culminated in a vision, yet the writer of *Acts* probably misleads us in his love of the external, the sudden, the dramatic. More certainly *Acts* misleads those who trust to it as regards the relations of Paul to the heads of the Church at Jerusalem. That book says that the Apostle, not long after his conversion at Damascus, came to Jerusalem, and was with the disciples coming in and going out, and preaching in the name of the Lord. This, however, is expressly denied by Paul himself in the *Epistle to the Galatians*, "Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were Apostles before me," "I was unknown by face unto the churches of Judæa which were in Christ." In this same passage Paul insists with the utmost emphasis that he did not receive the Gospel which he preached from the Apostles and the eye-witnesses of the life of Jesus, nor indeed from any man. It came to him direct through revelation of Jesus Christ. Paul may somewhat exaggerate his own independence, yet he was a spirit of remarkable originality, and it is a mistake to regard his view of Christianity as merely a modification of that prevalent among the first disciples.

It is necessary to emphasise this point, because almost all theologians have been misled by attaching too much weight to the vivid account in *Acts* of

Paul's conversion, to the speeches which on various occasions are in *Acts* put into the mouth of Paul, and to other passages which are, in fact, expressive of the views of Luke rather than of Paul. Now the views which Paul held of the person and mission of Christ were very different from the views held by Luke on those subjects. Among those who have been misled is a great critic, to whose remarkable insight I owe much—Matthew Arnold. In his admirable essay on St. Paul, Arnold expresses the view that it was primarily a contemplation of the human life of Jesus which worked upon the Apostle. Paul saw that His Master was without sin, that "Those eternal vicissitudes of victory and defeat, which drove Paul to despair, in Jesus were absent. Smoothly and inevitably he followed the real and eternal order, in preference to the momentary and apparent order."

We see all this in the life of Jesus as reported by the Synoptic Writers. It is familiar from childhood to all who live in England. But we must go back in imagination to the time of Paul. The Gospels were not then written. All knowledge of the life of Jesus was in the hands of the eye-witnesses, of those who had been with the Master in Galilee, and in the few days before His death in Jerusalem. And Paul tells us in the plainest and most decisive language that of them he made no enquiry, that it was not from men that he received the grounds of his faith, that it was not the life but the death of Jesus that interested him,

that he did not dwell on Christ after the flesh, but on Christ after the spirit.

How different in this respect the view of Paul was from that of modern divines, we may judge from an almost startling expression of his in *Romans* xv. 3. He is exhorting his converts to be unselfish, not to please themselves. By so doing they will follow their Master, "for Christ also pleased not Himself." How natural it would be to prove this by citing the events of Jesus' life, or the circumstances of His death. But this does not occur to Paul; he goes on to establish his statement, not by citing historic fact, but by quoting a supposed Messianic prophecy: "as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee, fell upon me." This passage shows in a vivid way how the mind of the great Apostle turned naturally away from history towards prophecy and doctrine.

He could not of course stand entirely aloof from the sacred tradition of the life-companions of the Master, which was naturally repeated orally in the Christian synagogues long before it was committed to writing. His attitude towards this tradition is clearly defined in a passage in 1 *Corinthians* xv. He there recapitulates the facts of the Gospel history as he received them, and as he passed them on to the converts: "I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He

was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared unto Cephas." And he goes on to tell of the other appearances to the disciples, including one to himself. Not a word as to the miraculous birth, of which indeed he had probably heard nothing; not a word as to the miracles, the transfiguration, the teaching. Paul speaks only of His Master's death, resurrection, and exaltation. The death to him is enveloped in doctrine, "for our sins"; the resurrection is connected with Old Testament prophecy; of the exaltation he claims to be himself a witness. I think we have here a clear expression of Paul's teaching, so far as it was historic. When he institutes the Lord's Supper in the Church of Corinth, he claims to receive it not from tradition, but direct "from the Lord." It was impossible that a nature so intense could care for mere tradition in anything like the same way in which he cared for his own experience. The end and object of his teaching was not to communicate history, but to build up his hearers into the life of Christ. What he represents is not uniformity of teaching, but continuity of life.

But, it will be said, if Paul thus received his message directly by inspiration, how could he be called a member of the Christian society? Was he not rather the founder of a new religion? Many critics have thought so. And it was from this point of view that F. W. Newman uttered his celebrated judgment—that of the two, Jesus

and Paul, Paul was the greater. But this view seems to me to rise out of a very imperfect comprehension of spiritual fact, and great scepticism as to the divine working in man. It sets intellect above will, and philosophy above experience. It ignores the continuity of spiritual life in the world.

It was by something which may perhaps best be called a divine contagion that the spirit of Paul was absorbed into the life of Christ. He had long striven after the forgiveness of sins and righteousness in the sight of God, but he had striven in vain. Through living by the Jewish law, he had attained the outward correctness of a Pharisee, but his heart was not cleansed. He still loved the evil, through he struggled against doing it, and at every forward step in the divine life slipped back again. At his conversion, by the grace of God, all this was changed. We cannot hope to describe the change better than in his own words: "It pleased God to reveal His son in me." To find a path fit for the heavy steps of human intelligence between the human life of Jesus and the Christ in whom dwells the Christian Church is very difficult. It involves the making of theories which can scarcely be more than compromises—temporary expressions of eternal realities. But when after all these ages we look back on the history of the formation of the Christian Church, we see that as a fact the spirit of Jesus absorbed that of Paul. Paul expresses in new doctrinal forms some of the essential ideas of Christianity.

He introduces into the Church some of the great religious ideas which were working among his contemporaries, pagans and Hellenistic Jews. Yet the spirit which presides over all the developments is the spirit which began to work in the world when the career of the Founder begins, and whose working has in all the ages since never wholly intermitted.

II

It would indeed be a foolish attempt, if I strove in a single lecture to mark even the outlines of the theology of Paul. It is a subject on which there are innumerable books. Although our preachers in church are seldom willing to allow that they do not fully understand the views of Paul, yet I fear that many of them would soon fail under cross-examination. Paul is unquestionably a very difficult writer: and perhaps one of the chief reasons of his difficulty is the reality of his inspiration. The great systematic theologians are determined that Paul also shall be a great systematic theologian. And they proceed, as Matthew Arnold has said, with great "vigour and rigour" to map out his scheme, as a consistent whole. But the difference between Paul and his commentators is that they try to develop as a logical scheme what was in origin not so developed. Paul was a great thinker. But his writings do not constitute a philosophic system, because they are not purposefully hammered out,

but fused by an intense heat from within. His basis is not only certain principles worked out to their logical results, but also experiences, like flashes of lightning which lit up the cave of consciousness, and melted its contents into new and sometimes irregular forms.

Recurring to the views set forth in the first two lectures, we observe that religious doctrine proper is distinguished alike from philosophic system and from dogmatic construction by this very thing, that it is not the offspring of thought, but the direct reflection in the world of intelligence of spiritual experience. The experience acts primarily on the will, in moving the springs of action. But it must also affect the intellect. And experience does not come into a mind void and formless, without history or principles. It takes its place in a personal history, an evolution. Thus doctrine is in those who originate it always formed and coloured by accepted principles. So in the case of Paul. The key to his doctrinal principles must be sought, partly indeed in his Christian experience, but also in the principles established in his mind at the time of his conversion—principles partly belonging to his Jewish parentage and upbringing, partly to the atmosphere of late Greek or Hellenistic religion and philosophy which pervaded all parts of the Levant, and notably the city of Tarsus, which was one of the celebrated seats of Greek cultivation. And attention has in recent years been called, especially by Professor Ramsay

of Aberdeen, to other very important conditions of the life and of the mind of Paul—conditions arising from the developed organisation of the Roman Empire, of his citizenship, of which the Apostle would seem to have been proud.

Wonderful indeed is the history in the Church of the doctrinal views of Paul. At first they can have been but little understood. How many among those to whom it was addressed can have understood the drift of the wonderful *Epistle to the Romans?* The Synoptic Gospels did not rouse opposition in the Church, since the narrative of a life does not directly appeal to the combative forces of the human intellect. But schemes of doctrine which can be followed only by those capable of systematic and persevering thought can scarcely be accepted in a moment. Certain parts of them will appeal to various minds, and the relation of the various parts must take new form in every powerful intellect. Thus in the writings of the first century of Christianity we find indeed traces of Paul, but Paul's specific doctrines are modified. From time to time there have arisen in the Church great theologians who have reverted to Paul, as Francis reverted to Jesus. But their teaching has never been really that of Paul, but a new version of it, suited to another mind and a different environment. Augustine, Anselm, Luther, Calvin, Jansen, have all been Pauline, yet in the main they were rather great thinkers of independent views than mere echoes of the great Apostle. From the day when

he wrote, Paul has ever been misunderstood; but the misunderstandings have been better for the life of Christianity than a more rigidly correct interpretation. For in that way the profound spiritual truths, the real facts which lie at the basis of the Pauline doctrines, have been emancipated from what was imperfect and temporary in his embodiment of them.

When in the spirit of historic criticism we take up the Epistles of Paul,—take them up not to gain thence help for our spirits or fresh views of that which is eternal, but merely to see what place the writer holds in Church history,—the imperfect and temporary side of his teaching soon becomes evident. We see that in his interpretation of the Old Testament he is more learned, but not less fanciful, than the Synoptic Writers. Like them he twists in arbitrary fashion to a Christian meaning passages which were certainly written with quite another intention, as when he argues in *Galatians* from the use of the singular σπέρμα, seed, that there is an allusion to the coming Messiah; or when he writes, "Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to the Jerusalem that now is, for she is in bondage with her children." We see that to Paul, as to Philo and other learned Jews, Scripture required to be interpreted, not in a simple and natural fashion, but as figure and allegory, as holding a meaning which did not meet the eye, but lay beneath the surface. And in this, after all, Paul only saw somewhat amiss a great and eternal truth.

It is quite true of all really inspired words that their full meaning only by slow degrees comes out in the course of ages. It is a truth which applies to the writings of Plato and Æschylus as well as to the Hebrew psalms and prophecies. He was only wrong in taking this truth in too literal and obvious a way, as if all phrases when used in the books of Scripture became thereby endowed with a variety of invisible meanings, like the words of a magic spell.

In another matter, in which the ordinary feelings of mankind led astray the Evangelists, Paul stands singularly free. He did not perhaps definitely set aside the miracles connected in common report with the life of his Master. He did not even deny that the working of wonders, the practice of healing and exorcism in the name of Jesus Christ, was the sign of Apostleship. But he shows us in clear and strong language that he valued spiritual gifts, and sufferings voluntarily undergone for the Master's sake, far more than he valued these manifestations. In the *Second Epistle to the Corinthians* he is impelled by the attacks of enemies to set forth in a most pathetic and human passage his claims to apostleship. He reminds his converts what he has been to them, he recounts the life which on their account he has led, "in labours more abundantly, in prisons more abundantly, in stripes above measure, in deaths oft." Then he comes to what is the crown of his glory, the mark of an exceptional calling by God, the visions and revelations of the Lord, which are the basis of

his teaching. In concluding he adds, "The signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, by signs and wonders and mighty works." But he speaks rather of these wonders as due to the Church than as matters of boasting to himself. In the same way in *Romans* (xv. 18) Paul mentions signs and wonders as wrought by himself, but puts them at a far lower level than his preaching. He was really the author of the way of regarding miracles which prevailed amongst the great theologians of Alexandria—that they were of far less account than the spiritual wonders which accompanied the rise of Christianity, the turning of multitudes to God, the character and work of Jesus. Of course, exactly this point of view is not open to us moderns, for the question of the power of human will over the forces of nature is one of enormous scientific interest, and we cannot thus lightly dismiss it. But at that stage of the world's history it was probably the noblest line open to thought.

Before we pass from the necessary task of showing the inevitable weakness of the Pauline doctrine to the more grateful work of appreciating its underlying truth, we must touch on another side of the matter. Doctrine is the expression of spiritual truth in the language of intellectual systems. As in reading New Testament history we are obliged to be on our guard against the conventions of the time accepted in the writing of history, so in what concerns doctrine, we must beware of too readily accepting from Paul what he only assumed as the

psychologic and philosophic truth allowed in the schools. No human being can make his mind a *tabula rasa* before he begins to think.

It need not be regarded as inconsistent with the unique sonship of Jesus Christ that He should have been dependent for knowledge as to what was going on around Him on the evidence of the ordinary senses, or that He should accept the current views as to astronomy and physics. On direct spiritual teaching, such as that of the Synoptic Gospels, this has no effect. But it is not the same in regard to doctrine. As soon as any religious teacher begins to formulate doctrine, the intellectual horizon tells. For example, many people do not like to call in question Paul's teaching as to the natural and spiritual bodies, or as to the opposition between flesh and spirit, because they regard his views in these matters as guaranteed by the nature of his inspiration. And yet these are merely stones which lay ready to hand in the beliefs of the time, and which Paul accepted because they were so shaped that they could well be built into the construction which he intended. The notion of a spiritual body, as opposed to the body of flesh and blood, is one which exists almost everywhere among peoples at a lower range of civilisation,[1] as well as sometimes in more advanced schools. The ghost has a body just as much as the living person, but this body has different properties; it can be seen but not felt; its relations to space are far less closely restricted, and

[1] See Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, chap. ix.

the like. The tales of the resurrection of Jesus Christ insist upon it that the very fleshly body of the Lord arose from the grave, and ascended into heaven. Paul, who will know Christ after the spirit and not Christ after the flesh, cannot accept this view. Flesh and blood, he says, cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. Christ arose in a spiritual body, and so shall His followers also arise, leaving in the grave the impediments and infirmities of the flesh. How this will be, Paul knows not; but he takes the resurrection of Christ and His appearance to himself as proof that in similar manner believers also shall rise. But the belief in the future life, which is the thing for which Paul really cares, is tenable quite apart from the theory of a spiritual body, the existence or non-existence of which is a question of science and not of religion, is a matter of evidence rather than of doctrine. We may accept Paul as a witness for religious fact without therefore committing ourselves to his views as to the spiritual body.

That other doctrine of sin, of the war between the spirit and the flesh, and the inherent badness of the latter, rests, as every one may know from experience, on truth and reality. Every one is tempted in the flesh by passion and the desire of the moment, and has to combat that passion by the power of the higher life. But put in the form in which it appears in *Romans*, the doctrine of the evil flesh is one familiar to students of ancient religion as one of the main tenets of the Mysteries in later

Greece. In the cults of Sabazius, of Mithras and other deities, the soul was regarded as imprisoned in the flesh, from which prison-house it is emancipated, either by death, or by mortification of the flesh, or by communion with some saving deity. Here again we may distinguish between the facts, the stern and undeniable facts of human sin and corruption, and the theory as to the cause of those facts. Paul seems to have two explanatory theories, the first Jewish and quasi-historic—that in the first of men Adam all sinned; the second Hellenistic and mystic—that matter is essentially vicious. Few people now would accept either of these explanations, which are obviously inconsistent one with the other. We know that the fall of Adam is a myth invented to explain facts of human nature—ideal not actual history; and probably physicists and biologists in these days would call us atheists if we proclaimed the inherent badness of matter. Modern thought takes one of two ways, either asserting with Browning and others that evil and sin are delusive appearances, not realities, or else, with almost all serious moralists, allowing the existence of evil and sin, and either not attempting to explain that existence, or trying to show that it is an essential part of the moral constitution of the universe.

As Paul's view of the past was conditioned by his acceptance of current belief as to Old Testament history and prophecy, so his view of the future was under the dominion of the expectation, universally current among the early Christians, of

the Master's speedy return to reign in a glorified earth. The passages in which Paul speaks of his earnest looking for the *parousia* are familiar to us all from infancy; and it is probably for that reason that we do not see how different the history of the Church has been from what Paul expected it to be. He looked for the sudden trumpet of the archangel, for the thronging of the dead in Christ to meet their Master, while the living also were caught up to meet the Lord in the air. In a moment material bodies were to be transformed into spiritual; and while the Christians in a joyous throng accompanied their Master to His throne, the unbelieving and the wicked would be annihilated in the second death.

Now all this vision belonged to the time, and as a child of the time Paul accepted it. But his unique greatness and his Christian inspiration are shown by the way in which in spite of it he rose to nobler spiritual levels. Though Christ was to come again visibly, yet in the meantime He was not absent from His Church, but the source of its continued life; though men were destined to a dramatic resurrection, yet the spiritual resurrection, to be attained here and now, was far more prominent in the Apostle's thought. Among his followers, perhaps even with himself towards the end of his life, the mists of materialism began to disperse, and he thought, not of being caught up alive to meet the Lord in the air, but of departing to be with Christ, which was far better than staying. Part

of Paul's gradual assimilation to His Master might well lie in the rejection of the apocalyptic phantasmagoria, as he had already rejected the appeal to miracle, and the idolatry of the Old Testament. But certainly in the great mass of the Pauline writings which have come down to us, apocalyptic expectations are everywhere interwoven in the spiritual fabric.

III

It seems that the same distinctions must be made, and that the same principles will hold, in regard to Paul's view of His Master. The real, the essential thing, was his experience of life in Christ; the theories as to the being of Christ were corollaries. The kernel of the Pauline doctrine is given in the *Epistle to the Philippians* (iii. 8-11), "that I may gain Christ, and be found in Him," "that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, becoming conformed unto His death; if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection of the dead." To die with Christ, and with Him to rise into newness of life; to crucify the flesh, and to attain to the righteousness and salvation which come of loyalty to the divine will as embodied in Christ,—this is the bottom of the teaching of Paul. And in this there is nothing temporary or local: it is as true in the experience of thousands to-day as it was in the first Christian age. It has been repeated

by all the great masters of Christian teaching, of whatever school.

But it was quite natural that Paul should not be content with the mere record of experience. That experience had to be explained in intelligible fashion. The outlines of Paul's Christology are written plainly enough in his Epistles, and yet may to some be unfamiliar. I will repeat his views as nearly as I can in his own words, only premising that in some cases these words may possibly come from his followers rather than himself, the authorship of some Pauline Epistles being disputed.

Jesus Christ, then, was a heavenly being,[1] destined from times eternal for human redemption,[2] in whom and through whom all things were created both in heaven and earth.[3] Being rich, for our sakes He became poor;[4] being in the image of God, He counted it not an object of ambition to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, being made in likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man He humbled Himself, becoming obedient to death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted Him, and gave Him the name which is above every name, that every tongue should call him Lord.[5] Ere long this same Lord shall descend from heaven, with a shout and the voice of the archangel,[6] to gather the saints to Himself. Under His feet shall all things be put:

[1] 1 *Cor.* xv. 47. [2] 2 *Tim.* i. 9. [3] *Col.* i. 15.
[4] 2 *Cor.* viii. 9. [5] *Phil.* ii. 9. [6] 1 *Thess.* iv. 16.

until the end, when He shall deliver the kingdom to God the Father: and then the Son also shall be subject to God, that God may be all in all.[1]

Paul's notion of Jesus Christ as a heavenly being who voluntarily humbled Himself and was then by God exalted is persisent. I certainly do not propose to criticise this view, which has been partly followed in the great epic of Milton. But it is surely not necessary to prove that the theory of Paul is very different from that which was afterwards expressed in the creeds of the Church. Another point is that in it doctrine goes beyond its natural sphere, which is the present, into the past and the future. And however experience may guarantee statements as to the present, it can scarcely reveal to us the past and the future of the world. In his anticipation of the future Paul was demonstrably mistaken; in his account of the past, he probably, as I showed in the last lecture, confused the efficient with the final cause of creation.

It further appears from Paul's own words that he supposed with Mark and the authors of the genealogies that Jesus was born in the natural way of a father sprung from the family of David. It is probable that, like the Fourth Evangelist, he held that the divine spirit was imparted to Him at baptism. At least that seems to be implied when he speaks of Christ as buried in baptism until He rose at the resurrection from the dead.

[1] 1 *Cor.* xv. 28.

However, we must not be led into further discussion of Paul's views of his Master's person: I can now treat the subject only in barest outline.

It must not be forgotten that in spite of Paul's great intellectual power, the bent of his nature was intensely practical. The Fourth Evangelist has been of great service to the growth of Christian doctrine, and to the faith of individuals. But Paul was a born statesman and missionary, having, like many great missionaries, a root deep in mysticism, but a habit of turning all thought into the mould of action, of thinking according to the laws of tendency, rather than those of logic. The life of the Churches which he founded was concentrated in him. What was necessary for their growth was developed in his mind. It is to Paul that is due the mystic doctrine of baptism and the higher view of the Lord's Supper. The importance of these institutions is far more urgent upon him than upon the Fourth Evangelist. In the sense of organisation and the determination to assert discipline and maintain order which mark the Pauline Epistles we may safely trace the spirit which gave birth to the Christian organisation.

In fact the whole Pauline theology is the expression of a battle—a battle waged first in the heart and soul of Paul himself, and then in the Christian community. From his youth up he had lived in the strictest following of the Jewish law, seeking through a close observance of its commands to attain to the forgiveness of sins and a

state of inward peace. His chief ground for persecuting the Christians had probably been the fear that they were working towards the destruction of the law. But his attempts towards the attainment of peace within failed; and he discovered, we know not how, that forgiveness and salvation, to which he could never attain by any struggles and resolutions of his own, could be reached by submitting to an inspiration revealed in the world by Christ, and accessible through communion with Him in His exalted life. And when once, after a terrible internal conflict, the new life had mastered his heart and will, he made it the purpose of his whole life to rescue others from the bondage whence he had escaped, that they might partake of the happiness, both present and future, which he had secured. Hence his hostility to those who relied on the Jewish law, though Paul never ventures to deny the divine origin of the law. But the Apostle soon found that the way of salvation of which he had to tell was more readily understood and welcomed by the Greeks than by the Jews. The Judaic Christian leaders were steadily hostile to him. Why this should be we see clearly. It was because the later cults of the Greek world had prepared the way for the Pauline mysticism, while veneration for the law was in most Jews intertwined with the very foundations of religion. But to Paul it was probably less intelligible. It was the difficulties thus raised, and attempts to meet them practically, mingled with the teaching of his youth, changed but not eradi-

cated, which set his intellect to work in the way of doctrine. His views as to the law, as to faith in Christ, as to predestination, justification, and the like, were thus formed, and his vehement and fervent intellect could never rest until he had worked them out into something like a system, though on many points he never reached self-consistency.

The Apostle's notions as to justification by faith may be hard and pedantic in form, distorted by the analogies of primitive law, and perverted by the fancy that merit and guilt can be transferred from person to person as material goods are transferred. But the root of it all lies deep in religious experience, in the knowledge of man's utter helplessness to attain by any effort of his own to a state of peace and salvation, in a conviction that without divine aid it is impossible to please God. What rouses above all Paul's passion of humanity is any teaching which may veil this fact from men, and may set them going about to establish their own righteousness, treading again that bitter path which by a sad experience he had learned to lead only to failure and to despair.

The Church occupies in the teaching of Paul the place which in his Master's teaching is taken by the Kingdom of Heaven. As the Kingdom of God was to Jesus the part of human life in which God's will was done, so the Church of Paul was the part of human life in which the perfect obedience of Christ was carried on—the society which abode in Christ and carried on his life in the world. Christ

was not merely its head, but its soul, and in Him the members of the Church were one in Christian love and union. But so intensely practical a nature as Paul's could not rest content with perceiving an idea and expressing it in thought. He must needs try to embody it, at least in some degree, in the visible world. Thus it seems very natural that the ecclesiastical discipline, the orders of bishops and elders, appear first in the Churches of Asia Minor founded by Paul. The organisation took place, it is true, after Paul's departure, but it was probably a legacy of his spirit.

The same practical tendency marks all parts of the Pauline theology. When Paul discusses sin and repentance and justification he is not intent on building up a system, but on making Christianity a working religion. When he speaks of the relations of law and gospel, he is dominated by intensely practical and pressing questions as to the admission of Gentiles into the Christian community. And when he speaks of the nature and person of his Master, he is full of the experiences of the Christian life, of his own life-history, of Christ as living in the Church, as well as revealing Himself to His votaries. He does not usually think out new and consistent views as to human psychology, as to the power of dæmons, as to the pre-existence of Christ, but adopts such current views as naturally commend themselves to him, and baptizes them into the spirit of the Christian life. And it is for such reasons that the Pauline theology has proved so wonderfully

full of vitality in history, continually rising again when almost forgotten, and starting on a fresh career. It is close to life and intertwined with reality. It is only the more exterior and unessential parts of it which grow outworn with time, and are ready to drop away. The essence of it is true to the experience of all ages.

IV

The third great theologian of the early Church, the author of the so-called *Epistle to the Hebrews*, is not to be compared with either Paul or the Fourth Evangelist as an original thinker. Yet there is something very fascinating about his writing, and his particular line of thought has had a great effect on Christian doctrine in subsequent ages. Like Paul and Philo, he too looks on the Jewish Scriptures as full of a hidden meaning, of type and symbol to be gradually explained. He regards the first and obvious meaning of Jewish ceremony and rite as ever the least important. Working in such a frame of mind, he might merely have added a chapter to the Talmud, full of quaint sayings and far-fetched interpretations. But happily he lighted on certain veins of gold. The special subject which attracts him is the ancient custom of propitiatory sacrifice; and this is no mere Jewish custom, but one belonging to man at almost all stages of his career—an instinctive manner of meeting one of the most profound and human of all the cravings of the

heart. Thus he takes up in a Christian sense one of the great branches of primeval religion, and grafts it for all time into the Christian tree.

In the *Epistle to the Hebrews* Jesus Christ is represented as the only great atoning sacrifice for men, foreshadowed by all the abundant animal sacrifices of the Jewish ritual, foreordained from the beginning of the world, sufficient to make compensation for all the sins of the world. As Christianity had to make its way among races to which the customs of sacrifice were familiar, and among which the great ideas at the root of sacrifice had an immense sway, it was an inestimable advantage to absorb and to baptise into Christ two of those ideas—the idea of the sacrifice of communion, and the idea of the sacrifice of propitiation. In the Christian Sacrament, which seems, so far as we can judge, to owe its character mainly to Paul, the primitive sacrifice of communion, in which deity and votary entered into a close blood-relationship one with the other, was perpetuated and raised to quite another level. Paul had also much to do with the spread of the belief that Jesus Christ was a sin-offering effectual for the removal of the sins of all those who came to Him by faith. But Paul's disciple, who wrote *Hebrews*, has given us the most clear and detailed exposition of the doctrine.

The great ideas which underlie the universal customs of sacrifice belong in origin to peoples at a low level of culture. In the view of the school of anthropology which takes its tone from Robertson

Smith, their working may first be observed among peoples who are at the totemic stage of development. But it would be a great mistake to suppose that because these ideas have power among barbarous peoples, they are nothing to us. On the contrary, they are suited to human nature at all stages of its development. The humbleness of their origin no more tells against them than does the fact that man is descended from a creature resembling the ape prove that he is incapable of high moral and spiritual attainments. These ideas have a history: their relation to man is gradual. On their adoption into Christianity they at once moved forward on to a higher plane. The Christian sacrifice of communion is to multitudes in our own day the great way of salvation. And even those who do not hold it in so high honour must find some institution to take its place. The Christian doctrine of sin-offering or vicarious sacrifice, with its corollary of justification by faith in Christ, has been of as great importance to the Reformed Churches as has the doctrine of the Sacrament to those who call themselves Catholic. And if the old fashioned doctrine of the Atonement is losing ground among modern conditions, yet in other forms the idea still persists, and must persist, unless the world is going to descend the spiritual hill which it has so painfully ascended.

There is also another idea, connected closely with the custom of sacrifice, yet different from the ideas of sin-offering and of the sacrifice of communion,

which the writer of the *Epistle to the Hebrews* brought within the Christian fold. I mean the idea of the priest as intercessor, as standing for men in the sight of God, as the representative of a community, and the channel whereby the prayers of the people reach the divine presence. We find indeed traces of this idea in the earlier history of Christianity; but they have not taken final form. The very title "Son of Man," so familiar to all readers of the Synoptists, yet so difficult of explanation, seems to imply that the Founder of Christianity was conscious of in some way representing collective humanity in the sight of God. The Fourth Evangelist, however, although he embodies in the great last discourse a view of the relations of his Master to God and to man which places him much in the position of an Intercessor, yet seems to reject that particular intellectual interpretation when he writes, "I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you, for the Father Himself loveth you." The phrase, "One mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus," does occur in a Pauline Epistle, but it is the *First Epistle to Timothy*, which cannot be regarded as fair evidence for the views of Paul himself. And in the *Epistle to the Romans* (viii. 26), when Paul is speaking definitely of intercession with God, he writes, "The Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered," not "Jesus Christ maketh intercession."

Thus it was left for the writer of the *Epistle to the Hebrews* to find full intellectual expression of

the mediatorial office of Christ. The idea of a representative human mediator is apparently almost as old as religion itself. Everywhere the priest not only represents his deity to men, but brings the prayers of his society before the deity. Among the Jews the mediatorial office was definitely taken by the High Priest of the House of Aaron. This perhaps made with many Jews a difficulty in allowing a mediatorial office in Jesus Christ, who was regarded as a descendant of David and not of Aaron. The writer of *Hebrews* avoids this difficulty by citing the tale how Abraham, and in his person all his descendants, acknowledged the superior priestly claims of Melchizedek, priest and king of Jerusalem; and finds a bond of union between Melchizedek and Jesus in the Messianic verse in the Psalm, "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek."

This line of argument, whereby the writer of the Epistle proves the mediatory character of Christ, could appeal only to Jews; it is rabbinical, of the race and the time. And yet what a history in the Christian Church was in store for the conception thus strangely introduced into it. It is only in nature itself that we can find parallels for so lowly origins of growths so magnificent. It is again the tale of the grain of mustard seed and the tree, of the hairy savage and the civilised man. And what is yet stranger, the doctrine of the mediatorial character of Christ was for ages and ages obscured by a thousand superstitions, while saints of very

doubtful lives, and human priests buried in superstition, acted in the Church the mediatorial part. At the Reformation the tree planted by the writer of *Hebrews* revived, and in a changed environment bore the fruit of action, of feeling, and of thought, of which it was capable. In our own times, doubtless, the intellectual horizon has again entirely changed; and the doctrine in the form in which the Reformers put it forth, is to many no longer acceptable. Perhaps the facts of which it is the expression need a new setting.

It is beyond denial that to a realisation of Christ in experience some view of His person is necessary, since, unless the intellect has a definite view, faith and feeling are cramped and stunted. And the never-ending and bitterly serious controversies in Christology which divided and perplexed the Church down to the time of Athanasius and later, prove the matters involved in those controversies to be of great import to history and religion. One cannot doubt that in this case, as in many others, what was ostensibly fought out in the field of intellect and philosophy was really a question of important ethical bearing. What, however, I venture to maintain is that various intellectual and doctrinal solutions are best suited to the mental and ethical conditions of various ages. A stereotyped formula is of no value to life. The moment a doctrine ceases to grow and change with changing conditions it becomes sterile, unsuited to its surroundings—mere dead wood in the tree of religion, and he who

has the courage to lop it off is a benefactor to the tree. Perhaps he will be a still greater benefactor who manages to infuse new life into a branch apparently atrophied. I venture to think that with a view to the formulation of doctrine no preparation can be more necessary than a careful survey of the forms which doctrine has taken in the past—a survey conducted not in the interest of any particular creed or church, but in a resolutely historic spirit.

LECTURE VIII

SUMMARY AND INFERENCES

OUR subject, and a subject amply sufficient for these few lectures, is "A Historic View of the New Testament." It is therefore abundantly clear that I cannot, after our rapid examination of the Gospels and Epistles, carry down further into the history of the Church an exposition of the successive views which prevailed in it as to the person of the Founder. I can only suggest that the clue which has led us thus far would, if followed, lead us further with safety. In the second and third centuries, as in the first, the key to the history of doctrine probably lies in the continued experience of the Church. Views prevailed rather because they were suited to their environment than because they were logical or in close correspondence with historic fact. But though this is generally true, yet no doubt, as the fervour of the original inspiration died down, and intellectual needs became more prominent, there was more tendency, in Matthew Arnold's language, to Hellenise, to develop intellectual systems, and to care more for consistency than

for precise correspondence with experience. It was in the School of Alexandria, and in the days of Clement and Origen, that Christology became among the educated a branch of philosophic theory. The able author of the *Continuity of Christian Thought*[1] traces most of the corruptions of the later Church to the fact that it left the thought of these great Greek masters for the Roman theories of Augustine and the Teutonic views of Anselm. Herein he seems to me to go too far. Beautiful as was the spirit, and advanced as was the philosophy of Clement, it became unsuited to the surroundings of the following ages, which were, we must remember, by no means ages of quiet thought, but of storm and stress, of barbarian invasions and imperial tyrannies. The Church had to study self-preservation rather than perfection. However, the second and third centuries do not belong to my subject. I will instead briefly sum up the results which we have thus far reached, and conclude with a glance at the conditions of the present age.

I

The Synoptic Evangelists have preserved for us an invaluable record of their Master's teaching. But when they deal with His deeds, His birth, life, and death, they are under the influence of two prepossessions which are sources of illusion, yet which have in them a kernel of truth. They bend the

[1] Dr. A. V. G. Allen, of the American Cambridge.

life of their Master in order that it may correspond literally with supposed foretellings of the Jewish prophets of what the Messiah must be and do. And they tend, under the influence of animistic views of the relations of spirit and matter, to ascribe to Him a miraculous power over the world of things visible, which He Himself appears to have expressly repudiated. But the illusion is of the surface; the truth lies deep. The relation of the life of Jesus to the utterances of the Jewish prophets was real and profound, more real and profound than the Evangelists could imagine, since both were embodiments of one sacred inspiration, both gave expression to the same spiritual truths. The words of Isaiah do not foretell the deeds of Jesus, but they record the whole spirit of His life. The servant of Jehovah, who bears the sins of many, and follows the path of self-renunciation to the bitter grave, is by Isaiah seen dimly, but in the pages of the Gospels He is visible actually walking the earth. And miracles mark every step of His life; not, however, the miracles which the Jews desired and the Saviour refused, but moral miracles of renovation of heart and soul, of power over the souls and bodies of men. He liberated men from the power of Satan, proclaimed liberty to the captives, raised the spiritually dead to a new life.

In fact the Evangelists really grasped their Master's main teaching, that man's business in the world is to do the will of God. But they

thought that will to be revealed in time and space in ways in which, as we have learned from experience, it is not revealed. As regards time they thought it was expressed in definite and detailed prophecy: as regards space and the visible world they thought that it was revealed in contraventions of the fixed order of nature. In both these respects, so far as we can judge, their Master stood on another level and did not share their views—views at the time natural and all but universal, yet destined in time to become untenable.

When, however, the Synoptists speak of their Master's second coming for judgment, it becomes harder to distinguish their additions and interpretations from words which He may have uttered. Our corrective here lies in the early history of the Church, in which we may discern the gradual eclipse of a more Jewish and materialistic view by one better fitted to be part of a great human religion. The vision of a Judge coming in the clouds of heaven to avenge the Church of its enemies, and to set up on the earth a millennial reign of the saints, gradually pales, and its place in the heart of the Church is taken by the more spiritual doctrine of a judgment of souls, and of reward and punishment in a future life. This doctrine no doubt accumulated also a certain amount of barbarous imagery and unpurged superstition. Yet in essence it has held its own from those days to our own; and in various modified forms still sways the minds of the mass of educated men.

In the searching fire of modern criticism the Synoptic Writings must lose something: they are not free from dross, and the dross must go. But the loss is largely made up for by the greater security and reality which pertain to those elements in them which survive the ordeal. The dross apart, they come out as pure gold, and the sediment of ages which had concealed their brightness and beauty is removed. Never probably, since they were first written for the good and happiness of the Church, have they been so fully and wisely appreciated as they are likely to be in the century which is dawning upon us. The real Jesus shines through them, and to an age which is passionately longing for reality He will come home more and more.

It is otherwise with the Fourth Gospel. One cannot help feeling, with profound regret, that for a time to this wonderful masterpiece criticism must bring more loss than gain. For the author of it has attempted a task which to our changed literary views does not seem legitimate. He has painted the past in the colours of the present; he has mingled with the biography of the historic Jesus thoughts and feelings which belong rather to the spirit of Christ in the Church. Like the Cyrus of the *Cyropædia* or the Socrates of the Platonic dialogues, the Jesus of the fourth Gospel is removed from the domain of actual history to the realm of the ideal. In an age which is set upon making history scientific, a work like this Gospel must needs for a time be a stumbling-block. We see indeed how many

thoroughly critical Christian writers find themselves unable frankly to face the truth in regard to it. Yet wisdom is justified of all her children. As the Fourth Gospel has been a great light of Christianity in the past, so it is doubtless destined to be in the future. Its rehabilitation will begin the day its true nature is generally recognised. So long only as it is criticised as history will investigation injure it. We must learn to apply in this case the fundamental principle of all criticism—that an author must be judged from his own point of view rather than from one which he does not recognise or contemplate. Thus regarded, the Evangelist must be considered not merely as one of the greatest of the world's theologians, but also as an inspired writer, full of the sap of religion, and an embodiment of the Christian spirit in one of its highest and noblest forms.

In the course of Christian history, we observe a remarkable fact in regard to the Pauline theology. It has frequently during long periods been relegated to the background, and then again brought forward by some inspired thinker in whom the spirit of Paul has seemed to live again. Augustine, Anselm, Luther, Jansen, have all been as it were cases of reversion to type, though of course in successive ages the idea has varied in expression. In each of these cases a great revival of religious thought arose from a return to the Pauline writings. One may wonder whether there is in store for the present day a revival of Pauline Christianity in a form

adapted to our newest modes of thought. It has been shown in the recent writings of Professor Ramsay that even careful geographic and historic research may do much to bring home to us the surroundings of Paul's life. And that the inner meaning of the Pauline views has not yet been half exhausted has been made clear by many writers, notably Professors Weizsäcker and Pfleiderer, Mr. Orello Cone, and Matthew Arnold in his remarkable Essay.

In the case of the theologians of the New Testament, as in the case of the historians, we have to make distinction between the earthly vessel and the ambrosia which it contains, and which without the vessel could not have been brought to the lips of thirsting men. The Logos theory, which may fairly be regarded as the bridge over which Platonism passed from heathen to Christian territory, has been of infinite value in the elaboration of Christian doctrine. The windows of heaven had been opened, and through the revelation of Jesus Christ a rich flood of new and divine inspiration had come down upon the earth. To the minds of the educated in Greece and Asia that inspiration could only commend itself if it came in a partially Platonic dress. And so great a master is Plato in the realm of philosophic thought that probably for all time a large part of those men who are attracted to philosophy will be in a degree descendants of Plato. In my opinion the growth of science, and the spread of what may be called the physiological method of

treating of mind and its activities,—the method of which I treated in my second lecture,—will in future greatly narrow the field of philosophic speculation, and render obsolete much of the philosophy of the past. But even so, what has been well thought in that philosophy will reappear in the systems of the future in a somewhat different guise. Some translation or some offshoot of the Logos doctrine may be in possession of the schools of theology ages hence.

However Paul and the great thinkers of early Christianity may have been unfitted for the construction of permanent systems of belief by their limitations, by imperfect philosophy and undeveloped science, we none the less owe to them the first and normal expression in the language of thought of the eternal facts of the Christian experience. By them the great central ideas of religion—sin, repentance, forgiveness, divine grace, and the new birth—are expressed in forms new to the history of the world, and at a far higher level than any previous expression. They baptized into Christ the two great forces of mystic religion and philosophic ethics, and the baptism saved those forces from destruction in the long stress of the Middle Ages, when materialism and primitive passions were in danger of ruining the whole fabric of religious thought elaborated by the strivings and aspirations of a hundred generations.

In fact the progress of theology, when theology is left free to progress, is closely parallel to the

progress of natural science. Science has as its task the explanation of the facts of the world, and it accomplishes that task by the invention and promulgation of one hypothesis after another. The theories live for a time; they colligate fact and make consistent thought possible; but after a while they are modified or disappear. In the same way, theology tries to explain the facts of the spiritual life by those hypotheses which are called doctrines. For a time each of these has its uses; but the use passes, and the need arises for a fresh statement. Unless human authority intervenes to forbid the natural process, doctrine will undergo change, decay, and renovation, just like scientific hypothesis.

I cannot resist the temptation to sum up the results of my lectures in the words of a modern prophet, Thomas Carlyle. "Is not this the history of all highest truth that comes or ever came into the world? The body of them all is imperfection, an element of light in darkness: to us they have to come embodied in mere logic, in some merely scientific theorem of the universe, which cannot be complete, which cannot but be found one day incomplete, erroneous, and so die and disappear. The body of all truth dies; and yet in all, I say, there is a soul which never dies—which in new and ever nobler embodiment lives immortal as man himself."

II

It is with unfeigned diffidence that I turn from the past to the present. The past belongs to history; but in regard to the present only those can claim a hearing who have devoted themselves to religious teaching. If, as a mere critic, I venture on a few observations, it is because it seems to be part of my task in a tentative way to endeavour to discern the bearing of the results of our historic investigation on the religious circumstances of our own age. In the present age, as in the past, there must be resistances—circumstances intellectual and social—which will determine the form in which the great ideas of religion must be embodied. Such embodiment must now as then be the work of men who are at once inspired with the ideas of religion and powerful in thought. No doubt, on all sides of us, in various degrees, this great work of construction has been going on. It is very difficult to criticise it because we see it so imperfectly. We are in the midst of the wood, on which our successors will look down as from a mountain-top. And yet it is we, not they, who will have to find a way through the wood.

The great formative ideas of Christianity are doubtless the same in our age as in the past ages of the Church. The spirit of the Founder still lives, and inspires the society which carries on the work which He began. To do the will of God is still the great end of Christian striving. To bring the King-

dom of God from heaven to earth is still the object of Christian prayer and Christian deed. But it needs must be that the outward expression should be different now to what it was in other days—that Christian doctrine should be affected by the marvellous changes which have taken place in an age when events have followed one another faster than ever before, when the swift progress of thought has in some degree rivalled the swiftness of modern locomotion, when new views of society, of morality, of all the bases of human intercourse, have succeeded one another like the flashes of lightning on a stormy night.

Since my limits in this concluding lecture are very narrow, I can hope but to mark a few outlines. I will first briefly indicate the efforts made in recent days by great systematic theologians to adapt to modern intellectual horizons the scheme of Christian doctrine. Afterwards I will give one or two examples of the way in which particular doctrines are generally in our days modified.

Before I speak of recent theology in England, I must turn for a few minutes to Germany. Germany has surpassed all the countries of modern Europe in the method and the power of systematic thought. Every educated person knows how largely the thought of the nineteenth century has been directed and controlled by the influence of German philosophy. Several of our greatest thinkers—notably Coleridge and Carlyle—have been under untold obligations to Kant and to Goethe. Most people

are also aware of the fact on which I dwelt in my opening lecture—that critical and constructive views of the history of Christianity are to be found in their highest perfection in the writings of the great Protestant theologians of North Germany. It is known to a much narrower circle that not only the history but the philosophic and dogmatic aspects of Christianity have been the subjects of most persistent and methodic thought on the part of great German writers. In recent years the influence of German methodic theology has begun to penetrate England, and Scotland in particular. It is a safe prophecy that this stream of influence will rapidly increase in volume. A book published in English, Professor Pfleiderer's *Development of Theology in Germany and Great Britain*, will give even to those who are not specialists a clear notion of the extent and the tendencies of systematic theological thought in Germany in the nineteenth century. And most of the important works of German doctrinal construction are now to be had in English translations.

I am aware that with an English audience one incurs suspicion if one appears to follow German lead too closely. And this feeling has some justification. We cannot in England adopt as they stand the great German systems of philosophy and theology. Yet every one acquainted with the history of the Reformation in England knows how much it owed to the great systematic theologians of the continent—Luther and Calvin and Zwingli. And to come to more recent times, Coleridge and

Carlyle are quite English in their type of thought; yet had they not drawn from German wells they would have been far less rich and far less effective. I venture to think that in this matter my life's study of archæology has made me better able to judge. I have been obliged to use ten German books for one English book, and the merits and demerits of German methods have become familiar to me from long practice. Let us profit all we can by the deep and systematic thought of Germany; but let us never forget that we belong to a nation with a different history and gifted with different abilities from those of the continental Germans.

On the boundaries of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries stands the colossal figure of Kant, on one side summing up in his critical philosophy the ordered and reasoned scepticism of the eighteenth century; on the other side offering to the nineteenth by his theory of the practical reason an escape from the barrenness of negation into the world of wider faith and nobler inspiration. Kant belongs not to Germany but to the world. He occupies in relation to modern philosophy a position similar to that occupied by Plato in the philosophy of Greece, or Aristotle in that of the Middle Ages.

It was through the door opened by Kant that the great constructive theologians of Germany passed into a land of distant perspectives and wide liberty. First comes the noble figure of Schleiermacher, the man of genius who stands at the head of modern theology, though others of his contem-

poraries, such as Herder and De Wette, had an important share in the great movement.

The result of the activities of Schleiermacher and Herder, and others, has been to bring about in theology a change parallel to that which Copernicus carried out in astronomy, when he showed the sun instead of the earth to be the centre of our system. In place of the teaching of the supernatural school, which made of doctrine a series of statements of fact sent down from heaven to earth, we find views of the Christian faith as developed from within the Church, not by a mere process of rational thinking, but as the result of the profound feelings of the religious heart. Hence arise the two great teachings of modern liberal theology: the relative or practical character of doctrine, and its gradual evolution in the history of the Church—two views of which the former stands at the basis of doctrinal construction, the second at the basis of religious history as understood in our times. No claim of absolute truth can be made on these lines for any doctrinal statements: they are the outcome of the observation of religious feeling, and must not be confounded with mere statements of the speculative intelligence.

It is on such a basis that the recent doctrinal theologians of Germany have built. I will not mention many names, which would be but names; but I must speak briefly of one theological school which is of great importance in Germany, and has in Scotland of late attracted much attention—the school

of Albrecht Ritschl. Two useful works on this school have been published in English by Professor Orr and Mr. Garvie; and a brief German summary by Dr. Wendland is perhaps even more trustworthy.[1] Among those who have been strongly influenced by Ritschl are some of the ablest theologians of Germany—Herrmann and Kaftan, and Schürer, the first of authorities on Jewish history, and Harnack, whose history of dogma is one of the greatest achievements of the nineteenth century.

The real core of Ritschlianism, and that which has made it a force in the world of religion, is its acceptance of what I have called the physiological view of religion, which is enforced not only by the discoveries of modern science, but also, as in these lectures I have tried to show, by the authoritative voice of the Founder of Christianity. That action and feeling in religion precede thought, and that thought out of relation to action and feeling is lifeless and useless,—this has been at the bottom of Ritschlian philosophising. As Mr. Garvie observes, this view is in fact but a new way of putting the truth that if a man does the will of God he will know the doctrine, whether it be of God or not.

The Ritschlian theology lays great stress on the distinction between theoretic judgments and what it terms value-judgments—that is, judgments in

[1] J. Orr, *Ritschlian Theology and Evangelical Faith*, 1898; A. E. Garvie, *The Ritschlian Theology*, 1899; J. Wendland, *Albrecht Ritschl und seine Schüler*, 1899.

which will and character have a greater share than man's mere faculties of knowledge; and the judgments with which religion is concerned are of this practical character. Hence the Ritschlians are prepared to reject religious statements which are of a metaphysical and *apriori* character; Christianity is brought down from the formulæ of creeds and the mists of history into relation with human needs and hopes.

The doctrine of value-judgments, as taught by Ritschl, has been from the first the favourite target for the darts of his opponents. Certainly it is easy for an enemy to place the doctrine in an unfavourable light, and easy for a follower to caricature it into something quite unworthy to form the base of a great theological system. Yet in fact it is but a form of stating the duality of man as thinking and willing being, which nature has established, and which must bring to the ground any intellectual system set up in disregard of its truth.

I may quote from Mr. Garvie a statement of the way in which from such a point of view Ritschl approaches the great problems of Christology. "To reach the worth of Christ he starts from the work of Christ. This is the inductive method of modern science. He starts from facts—what Christ is and does in the community which bears His name, and thus he reaches the truth, which alone explains the fact, of what Christ is in His own person. Christian theology hitherto has

usually started from the self-witness of Christ, or the apostolic testimony to Christ; but this method may be charged with two defects. In the first place it must at the beginning of the investigation assume the entire and constant trustworthiness of the Scriptural records and reports; and such an assumption, unless it be the conclusion of a previous searching and thorough critical process, cannot be made the foundation for such a structure as the ecclesiastical dogma of Christ's person. But this method suffers from a still more serious defect. It is not experimental; it does not start from the religious consciousness itself; the confession of Christ's divinity rests on external authority, not personal conviction. Ritschl's method seems provisionally at least to be the better of the two."[1]

Mr. Garvie is, as I think, too much disposed to attribute to Ritschl in particular qualities which belong rather to the modern theology of Germany generally. And it cannot be denied that the theology of Ritschl, suggestive though it may be, is by no means free from defects. He certainly treats passages of Scripture in a very arbitrary fashion. His Christology is by means entirely free from speculative elements derived from the old metaphysical theology. And his determination to be regarded as a spiritual descendant of Luther sometimes mars his liberty of thought, or makes him misinterpret the writings of the great Reformers.

[1] Garvie, *op. cit.* p. 267.

One marked feature of Ritschl's teaching deserves notice. Schleiermacher had held that whereas in Catholicism the relation of the individual Christian to his Master depends on his relation to the Church, in Protestantism, on the other hand, the relation of the Christian to Christ comes first, and his relation to the Church is secondary. But Ritschl, on the contrary, maintains that even in the Reformed Churches the community is in union with the Head, and individuals with the community. It is certainly a remarkable testimony to the spread of Socialist ideas that such a view as this could be set forth by an adherent of the Lutheran theology.

The Ritschlian school is the most prominent among German schools of theology, and therefore deserves a special mention. But some critics who have called my work *Exploratio Evangelica* Ritschlian have been mistaken. When I wrote it, Ritschl was to me only a name. So far as my limited researches into German theology have taken me, I find much greater attraction in the writings of some of Ritschl's contemporaries and opponents than in his own. In dealing with New Testament literature there seem to me to be many safer guides than Ritschl. And in the theory of cognition and the construction of doctrine, Professor Lipsius of Jena, recently lost to the visible Church, occupies a sounder and a more defensible position.

Into the questions at issue between great German religious thinkers I cannot now enter.

And it is clear that whatever may be the value of their great theological constructions, they cannot be merely transplanted from the soil of Germany to that of England. If we are to receive benefit from them, that must again take place which happened at the time of the Reformation. Then Germany and Switzerland produced the great system-makers, who influenced all northern countries. Yet in every land the Reformation took a different course, in accordance with national circumstances and character. I do not doubt that the same will be the case in our day. It is not enough to translate writers like Hegel and Ritschl; we must re-think their thought from the beginning before it can be adapted to the English mind. We are far less capable than the Germans of long trains of systematic thought, and we above all nations attach pre-eminent value to experience. The national type of mind is rather that of Locke, Adam Smith, Thomas Huxley, than that of the speculative thinker. So though we take our start with the followers of Schleiermacher and make for the same goal, we shall probably find that our roads do not coincide.

I shall make no attempt to trace the outlines of the history of English theology during the last century. In comparison with the writers of the Continent our great religious teachers have been less methodical and more hesitating: in fact it is not the English way to work out in logical fashion great systems of theology. Thus even a grateful

reader of the works of Church and Maurice, Westcott, Robertson, Dale, and Martineau, may feel that there is still much to be done in the way of religious thought. On the other hand, writers who have not been primarily religious, historians like Carlyle and Seeley, poets like Tennyson and Browning, critics like Matthew Arnold and R. H. Hutton, have expressed in their writings with great force some of the aspects of religious experience and progress. Theology is alive and moving; and he would be a bold man who would venture to foretell in what directions it is likely to turn in the coming days.

We have also in England had great religious movements of far-reaching effect, especially the well-known Oxford movement in the thirties, and the far more massive and important movement which was originated by Wesley and Whitefield in the eighteenth century. I hope I am not presumptuous in saying that, great as these movements have been in the religious world, they have not been nearly so great in the world of thought. Wesley was a born missionary and organiser like St. Paul, but he had not St. Paul's power of religious theory. The leaders of the Oxford movement were in intellectual matters merely reactionary, falling back on the early Christian Fathers. Newman alone among them could be called a great thinker, but even in him thought was largely controlled by emotion. One cannot help sometimes wondering what would have been the history of English religion if Wesley had had the power of systematic

thought which belonged to Calvin, or Newman the religious boldness of Schleiermacher. But such speculations are otiose. Probably the added weight would have prevented Wesley and Newman alike from doing their appointed work in the world. That work was indeed serious. To the influence of Wesley was mainly due the great Evangelical movement in England; and the Wesleyan churches in America have far more members than any other branch of the Reformed Church. We have also seen the rise in recent years of that vast organisation called the Salvation Army, which is an offshoot of Methodism. The great change as regards seriousness and efficiency which has in the last half century come over the Church of England doubtless goes back to the Tractarians as its origin.

But meantime the fact remains that the powerful and energetic Churches of England and America are in the matter of systematic religious thought somewhat backward. Christianity is doubtless more real, more living, in England than in Germany; it has close contact with spiritual fact, but it is seldom in touch with advanced thought. There is here much leeway to be made up in the dawning century. It may be thought that to the ordinary Christian it is not important to think consistently. This, however, is a mistake of the same kind as is made when it is supposed that high scientific education is not necessary to the progress of practical manufacture—a common but a demonstrable delu-

sion. The thoughtful must think wisely in order that the practically minded may act wisely.

III

Can we venture, after observing the religious movements and tendencies about us, to judge what kind of expression the spirit of Christianity is likely to take among us? It seems to me that from these lectures we can gather at least three suggestions, which I cannot of course set forth now in any detail; but I can scarcely more appropriately conclude than by briefly submitting them to the judgment of those who are responsible for our religious teaching.

First: Belief in the continuity and inspiration of history must needs clear and exalt our views of the history of the Christian Church, which must be taken as a whole.

Second: Proper appreciation of the function of the will in active and religious life must have a direct effect on doctrine.

Third: The growing habit of regarding society as an organism rather than a mere congeries of individuals must tend to revive the Founder's teaching as to the Kingdom of Heaven.

I

The prominence given in England to such studies as anthropology, comparative mythology, prehistoric archæology, have familiarised us, perhaps beyond all

nations, with the comparative method in all historic studies, while the specialism which has in Germany been carried so far has there tended to hinder the co-ordination of different branches of science. I cannot believe that in England we shall rest content, like the Ritschlians, with treating Christianity as if it were set apart from all other religions, and to be investigated without reference to them. Ritschl refused to see in conscience an immediate witness of God, would hear nothing of a natural revelation, and regarded the suggestion of it as injurious to Christian faith; and even Harnack seems to regard the adoption by the early Church of Greek elements of religion as a forsaking of its mission in the world. Yet if we believe in the divine government of the world, and in evolution in history, we must needs hold that to all good men in various measure and degree the divine Spirit communicates religious impulse and the seeds of belief.

There can be no question that the transfer of the theory of evolution, and of the survival of the fittest, from the domain of biological to that of social and historic science must needs not only add greatly to the dignity of history, but also make us look on the past with more appreciative and less coldly critical eyes. For if those theories be well founded it follows that no religious movement of the past can have been altogether wanting in justification; if it had not had some reason for success it could not have succeeded. And if there be any divine control of events, we are bound to regard it as at

least probable that in the great majority of cases it was the good rather than the evil in the movement which won for it the victory. So doctrine accepted in the past by the Church, if accepted on grounds of experience rather than of logic, is almost sure to have in some way expressed the best mind of the Church, and tended towards progress. Instances of retrograde tendencies and of corrupting doctrines may of course be found; but we shall be justified in considering them as the exception, not the rule,—the result of disease, not of normal growth. We may put away for ever the base and degrading view that past history is but a record of the faults and follies of mankind — that the history of the Church before the Reformation was nothing but a downward course.

This has been the fault of Protestant Church history. But the fault of Catholic Church history has been graver still, in that it has confused the invisible kingdom of God with a visible organisation. Such a view might be natural before the Reformation, when all Western Europe was united in one fold, and the Churches of Eastern Europe were so far away as to be out of sight. In our days it may still be possible for an educated Italian or Spaniard to retain this point of view. But how it can be retained by a theologian of England or Germany or America it is not easy to see. The history of the whole Church, from the day when the Founder called His first disciple, to last Sunday, with the sermons preached on it in every Christian

country, belongs to every member of the body of Christ on earth. The religious ancestry of every one of us goes back, from spiritual father to spiritual father, to the founders of Christianity, and from them back to the first man who felt an emotion of awe in the presence of the unseen, or curbed his fleshly appetite in obedience to a higher law felt within.

II

The two great Kantian teachings of the relativity of knowledge and of the primary importance of will must needs have, with all who accept them,—that is to say, with the vast majority of thinking men,—an immense effect on the fabric of Christian doctrine. At the first contact the effect seems utterly destructive, for doctrine has, in all past ages of the Church, been largely built in *apriori* fashion, in a region which now appears to be outside the limits of legitimate and effective thought. That the World and the Church are hereby to some extent impoverished is true. But yet speculative systems of doctrine have after all no very close relation to the religious life—at all events in our time. And it will probably be found in due course, as indeed the history of religious thought in Germany abundantly proves, that much which is shown to be in a purely speculative aspect illegitimate can be restored and established upon a less dignified but more durable practical basis.

I do not agree with those Christians — very

numerous in our days—who hold that doctrine in religion is out of date, and life and character the sole tests of faith. This is an exaggeration of the truth. *Apriori* metaphysical constructions, such as the more elaborate creeds or the *Westminster Confession*, are out of date. But for doctrine there still remains a place, though less exalted than of old, and functions which are important though more humble than our ancestors supposed. Doctrine cannot hope to comprise eternal truth in human words, but it can summarise in intelligible speech the experiences of the religious life. Its basis will be practical, not speculative; its methods psychological rather than logical. It will not be afraid of constantly stopping when the limits of thought are reached: it will not even be ashamed to leave standing side by side antinomies which cannot be reconciled, but both of which embody an aspect of reality. If men cannot fathom the divine thought they can follow the divine will. Right thought in religious matters is very important; but rather because of the close relations which exist between thought and character than because thought in itself can measure the height and length and breadth of spiritual reality. Some theologians in England have strongly felt that in future character must be the basis of doctrine, especially the late Dean Church, who, but for his excessive modesty, might well have become the head of a school of religious thought in England.

The change in the spiritual centre of gravity

must needs have a great effect on received doctrine. It bears directly upon the religious view of man and his natural history—upon such matters as sin and forgiveness, repentance, and the new life—on divine grace and the hope of a future life. And it bears also upon the ideas accepted in the Church in regard to the person of the Founder of Christianity. No one can take up the widely influential works of modern theology, *Ecce Homo*, *Lux Mundi*, Robertson's *Sermons*, and the like, without seeing how this leaven is working on all sides of us. To what final results it will work we see as yet but imperfectly; it may be that generations will pass before the process is complete; on the other hand changes may come sooner than we imagine.

As a striking indication of change in the outlook not of one school but of many, I will refer to a recent paper published by Mr. Wilfred Ward in the *Fortnightly Review* for May 1901, in which he maintains that Cardinal Newman and the late Professor Sabatier had much in common in their teaching. "In Cardinal Newman's sermon, already referred to, we have expressly set forth four principal points in M. Sabatier's theory: (1) that religion creates dogmatic propositions (not *vice versa*), such propositions being the result of the mind's reflection on the impressions it receives of revealed truth; (2) that the formulated dogmas are not essential to the genuineness or perfection of religion or religious belief; (3) that the dogmatic propositions whereby such truths as the Trinity and Incarnation are

defined are only a partial analysis of the sacred impressions and ideas which are the life of religion, and are only symbols of the reality; (4) that dogmas and creeds, although not adequate to these impressions and ideas, are one chief means of transmitting and perpetuating them.

These propositions, which, according to Mr. Ward, are common to Newman and Sabatier, I heartily accept. The relative view of religion which these propositions embody is in effect the view of Schleiermacher, of Ritschl, of Lipsius. I have only to add that the early history of the Church, when examined on this basis, in accord with the well known and generally recognised rules of historic research, will take some such form as it takes in Professor Harnack's *Wesen des Christenthums*, or in the present work. Newman of course did not realise this any more than did Schleiermacher, because the principles of historic investigation were in their days very imperfectly understood; but it has since become clear. Sabatier was fully aware of it. Can it be that on these lines we are approaching a view of Christian doctrine in which the highest and the broadest of Churchmen may unite?

These lectures have been, as all treatises which deal with early Christian doctrine must be, largely concerned with the theories of the person of Christ which prevailed with successive schools of theology. If it be true, as I have maintained, that these theories are mainly attempts to account for

Christian experience in the current formulæ of the schools, then it becomes quite clear that the substitution of psychology for metaphysics, which is a marked feature of contemporary thought, must have a great effect on all systems of Christology. Instead of dwelling on nice metaphysical distinctions of substance and personality, which have to us lost their meaning and attraction, the modern theologian will try to ascertain through observation aided by history what is the actual nature of divine revelation to man, and how it uses the medium of humanity. In my opinion investigations of this kind are quite as likely to be destructive of the less as of the more orthodox systems of Christology which have prevailed in the past,—as likely to put out of court many rationalist and theistic views as the Athanasian Creed itself. The *apriori* method in theology, which starts not from what actually takes place, but from what people choose to regard as reasonable assumptions, has been in favour with some members of the most diverse schools down to our own day. Many of us still apply in theology methods which in physical science had become antiquated in the days of Aristotle, although at the same time beneath the crust of arbitrary theory there runs the hot lava of the Christian life. What is really wanted is a consistent and intelligible explanation of the rise of Christianity and the course of Christian history; and the theory which will fully explain all these phenomena is the Christology suited to the age.

III

There is another respect in which the trend of modern thought has given us a new way of regarding Christianity. As the growth of historic knowledge and the acceptance of evolution in religion is setting aside the shallow rationalism which marked the eighteenth century, so social feeling among men is laying the axe to the root of the mere individualism which has in recent times been a constantly increasing danger among us. Socialism, alike in thought and in action, has gained much ground. It has become impossible to think of a man as an isolated being, without relation to the stock from which he springs and the human beings to whom on every side he is closely related. The community no less than the individual has to be considered as an unity, with history, with purposes, with ideals.

It is not strange, in view of this trend of feeling, to find that the most prominent place in the Ritschlian theology is taken not by the conception of the spiritual life in individuals, but by that of the Kingdom of God. It is not the individual so much as the society or community which is the recipient of divine inspiration. The object of God's love is not men taken one by one, but humanity as organised in the Kingdom of God through love. It may be that in this matter Ritschl goes too far, for after all it is only in the consciousness of individuals that divine inspiration can be realised;

religious utterance must come from individuals; and the will of individuals must lead society in the right way. Nevertheless there is profound and most important truth in the recognition of the divine mission of the society. Individualism carried to extremes has been the bane of Protestant countries. In them the rights of the individual conscience, the free and separate standing of every man in the sight of God, has been dwelt on to the exclusion of all besides. The great and original Christian idea of a Kingdom of God has been lost sight of. This it seems to me is the chief cause of the constant and undeniable attraction which the Roman Church exercises in Teutonic countries. In however materialist and arbitrary a form the Roman Church has embodied the idea of the divine kingdom, at all events she *has* embodied it, and thus has often seemed to represent order and love as opposed to the conscientious self-isolation of the Calvinist and the Puritan. And when Protestants have endeavoured to bring about on earth some realisation of the divine order—some reign of the saints under their heavenly King, as in the English Commonwealth and the States of New England, and at Geneva, they have proceeded with so much harshness, so complete disregard for natural human feelings and ties, that a strong reaction has always followed.

The Reformed religion can never recover the position which it once held among Teutonic races until it has discovered some embodiment in belief and in organisation of the idea of the Kingdom of

God, which shall be effectual in penetrating and swaying the population in Teutonic countries. Consciously or unconsciously this conviction, I think, has wide sway among us, and lies at the roots of some of the greatest of modern religious movements.

IV

In conclusion, I will return for a moment from the social to the intellectual outlook.

I have already spoken of the Wesleyan and the Tractarian movements in England, and have suggested that in both these movements the most striking fact is their poverty in religious thought. Both movements have failed to gain a firm hold on the educated laity. I do not think that the cultured laity are giving up religion; but they are ceasing to look for it to the Churches, looking rather to writers like Carlyle, Tennyson, and Ruskin. There seems to me a great danger that the public worship of Christianity may be left to the clergy, to women, to the uneducated. And this danger can be obviated only by bringing the teaching of the Churches nearer to the level of modern thought.

In the first centuries of Christianity the movement which originated with Paul, was carried on by the Fourth Evangelist, and completed in the Alexandrian school of theology, brought Christian thought on to the level of Greek philosophy, which was at the time the highest of existing intellectual

developments. In our day religion has again to be put on terms with culture. But philosophy no longer holds the place which it held among the Greeks. Its place is largely taken by science—by ordered knowledge of the material, the living, and the human worlds. It is now generally recognised that physical science and religion do not clash, because they have different spheres. But the relations between religion and human science, between theology on the one side and psychology and history on the other, are not clearly determined, and here there is continual clashing and friction. Until the teachers of religion realise that in our days psychology and history are undergoing great changes and a vast development, and until they succeed in reconciling religious thought to that development, they will preach to hardened minds, and have effect only on those which are less robust.

If will be the final fact in human nature, and man's active faculties more primary than his thinking powers, it does not hence follow that thought in religion may be neglected. An unreasonable religion—a religion which is in constant collision with evidence and with fact—cannot be lasting; and it loses its hold over men in proportion as their intelligence is developed. In times of stress and sadness they may recur to it in spite of all intellectual difficulty, because man is a religious creature, and he cannot live cut off from the spiritual forces which surround us. But it would save infinite pain

and loss if religion could grasp and satisfy men in their hours of intellectual activity, instead of merely finding an entrance through emotion, and being retained because it meets the cravings of human nature.

THE END

Printed by R. & R. CLARK, LIMITED, *Edinburgh.*

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

EXPLORATIO EVANGELICA

A BRIEF EXAMINATION OF THE BASIS AND ORIGIN OF CHRISTIAN BELIEF

BY

PERCY GARDNER, LITT.D.

PRESS NOTICES

Sheffield Independent.—"This is an attempt by a layman, skilled in archæology and the early history of the Christian Church . . . to examine early Christian history and doctrine by independent and logical methods."

Daily Chronicle.—"We think it likely that Dr. Gardner's book will mark the opening of a new and better era in religious controversy. . . . It should be easier henceforth for the rationalist critic and the Christian advocate to understand and respect each other."

Guardian.—"After all, the book appears to be an attempt at reconstruction. By sharply distinguishing the mere event from the truths believed to depend upon it, the writer tries to save the truths from falling with the denial of the event; and by distinguishing the facts of religious experience from the many ways in which they have been expressed in doctrine from age to age, he recalls attention to the permanence and truth of the facts, which their doubts of the doctrine have led many to deny. Now if it should prove, on a fair and thorough criticism, that on historical grounds the conclusions summarised in this book, or others like them, are true, then Professor Gardner has done a work of simply inestimable value in sketching the lines of reconstruction."

EXPLORATIO EVANGELICA

BY PERCY GARDNER, LITT.D.

PRESS NOTICES—*Continued*

Academy.—"Professor Gardner's competence has already been proved by more than one admirable volume upon the subjects of his Chair. He now approaches a cognate theme, in the handling of which those habits of weighing and considering evidence which he has acquired, so to speak, *in corpore vili*, must necessarily stand him in good stead."

Christian World.—"The book is emphatically one for cultured minds. Such, while perhaps disagreeing with the author in many points of detail, will, we believe, feel that, in pointing them to the ultimate facts of human experience as the bed-rock of Christian evidence, he has rendered inestimable service to the religious thought of to-day."

PROF. HOLTZMANN in *Deutsche Litteraturzeitung.*—"Throughout the author draws his sketch with a steady hand and on sure lines. I at least have come across no English account which investigates the facts with such honesty and impartiality, and sets them forth in so capable a manner."

PROF. P. LOBSTEIN in *Theologische Litteraturzeitung.*—"In carrying out consistently the plan which he has traced out, the author has contributed a treatise on the philosophy of religion of the kind which we associate with the name of Lipsius, our neighbours with that of Sabatier. We hope that the book will find readers who are able to bring to it the same interest with which it was written—an interest to which each page bears eloquent testimony."

Saturday Review.—"In tone and feeling it is uniformly admirable, steering successfully a middle course between the Scylla of pedantry and the Charybdis of irreverence. . . . It is evidently an honest attempt to indicate the lines on which Christian doctrine may be restated in deference to the requirements of science and history."

In Demy 8vo, Cloth, Price 15s.

Published by A. & C. BLACK, SOHO SQUARE, LONDON

THE LATEST BIBLE DICTIONARY.

ENCYCLOPÆDIA BIBLICA

EDITED BY THE

REV. T. K. CHEYNE, M.A., D.D.,

AND

J. SUTHERLAND BLACK, M.A., LL.D.,

Assisted by many Contributors in Great Britain, Europe, and America.

VOL. I., **A to D.**

VOL. II., **E to K.**

SOME PERSONAL OPINIONS OF THE WORK

VOL. III., **L to P.**

VOL. IV., **IN THE PRESS.**

TO BE COMPLETED IN FOUR VOLUMES.

NET PRICES PER VOLUME:

CLOTH.	HALF LEATHER.	FULL LEATHER.	*PAPER BOARDS.
20s.	25s.	30s.	20s.

* This style is printed on thin Bible paper to go into one volume when complete.

A Detailed Prospectus will be sent on Application to

A. & C. BLACK, SOHO SQUARE, LONDON,

PROPRIETORS AND PUBLISHERS OF THE "ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA."

What the Religious Papers Say.

"Preachers and students, who have been accustomed to look to the *Encyclopædia Britannica* for freedom, reverence, and learning in criticism, will find these qualities in this new work raised to a higher power and presented in more attractive form. We do not see how any minister in active service could find in the English language, at the same expense, more knowledge better adapted to his use."—**Christian Register.**

"The volume altogether is a veritable mine of information."—**Christian World.**

"The second volume of this magnificent work deserves the same high praise that we accorded to the previous volume. . . . The thoughtful and painstaking character of the various articles, and the extraordinary store of valuable material accumulated, must impress all who are fortunate enough to possess a copy of the work."—**Church Bells.**

". . . A further contribution to one of the greatest gifts of honest scholarship to this century."—**Coming Day.**

"The volume shows all the care and ingenuity that distinguished its predecessor. Nothing is scamped; the shortest articles reach the same high level of thoroughness and accuracy maintained in the larger. The volume should be in the hands of all serious students of the Bible."—**Examiner.**

"Neither money nor labour has been spared to produce a work of reference which shall adequately represent the best European scholarship. And in the Encyclopædia, so far as it has gone, there are a number of articles to be found which are distinctly the best and most comprehensive, in regard to the subjects treated, that have appeared, to our knowledge, in any work of reference."—**Guardian.**

"The scholars responsible for it are amongst the foremost men of their day in knowledge and we know of none who would be likely to surpass them in honesty and courage."—The Rev. J. Page Hopps in **Light.**

"The second volume of this great work is more interesting and valuable even than the first. . . . No serious student can afford to neglect it."—**Methodist New Connexion Magazine.**

". . . A storehouse of information and suggestion for ministers of all denominations, and not only will the clergy and ministers of religion derive instruction and enlightenment from its pages; that small but influential section of laymen who still succeed in finding time to ponder the great themes of God, man, and immortality, to the consideration of which the thoughts of the wise and good must ever turn, will also discover in these articles light and leading over dark and difficult paths."—**New Age.**

"It is only the barest justice to the publishers and to the editorial staff to say at once that the book is magnificently brought out. We have never seen a work of reference in which the material was better arranged, which was more easy to consult, and in which as little space was wasted." **Pilot.**

"All Biblical scholars must have it."—The Rev. Dr. Grieve in **Present Day Papers.**

"We look for and we find the results of minute research, a learning which tells us of the most recent discoveries and the most recent theories, and we think it a book which a mature scholar will find of the highest value."—**Record.**

". . . This, in many respects, remarkable work. . . . The book of the opening century."—**Saint Andrew.**

What the Secular Papers Say.

"It has those characteristics which we noted in relation to the first volume—careful editing, a system of reference to the contents of articles needed for the full elucidation of the contents of each article which is marvellous for its extent and accuracy, exact and scholarly workmanship in all articles, in the smallest and the greatest, and many other merits both of work and of the printing and get-up of it which we need not mention."—**Aberdeen Free Press.**

". . . Richly worth possessing in every Christian home if for the sake of this article only (Gospels). One rises from every use of the solid tome thinking how great and gifted is the host of scholars who are intensely devoted to the portrayal of the story of Jesus."—**Bradford Observer.**

"There is an immense amount of carefully edited and valuable information for the Bible student, whatever may be his critical views. Nothing is introduced in a veiled and stealthy way. Everything is frank, open, advanced or not advanced, as the case may be, and the student is asked to read and judge for himself."—**Chicago Advance.**

"But the characteristic and most admirable feature of the *Encyclopædia Biblica* is the entire absence of any controversial purpose. The object of the writers is, in every case we have been able to note, not to establish any particular doctrine or dogma, but to give an impartial account of the work which scholarship and criticism have done, of the suggestions made or the conclusions arrived at."—**Daily News.**

"It is admirably printed and illustrated; it is edited with scrupulous care, and is a monument of learning."—**Glasgow Herald.**

"This noble work embraces an extensive area of instruction and information to the Bible student, critically treating of, in fair but uncompromising terms, the literary, political, and religious history, and the archæology, geography, and natural history of the Bible."—**Huddersfield Chronicle.**

"It is not easy to over-estimate the importance of such a work to every minister of the Gospel, student or reader. No library can well be complete without it, and certainly every reference library would lack its full equipment were this missing from its shelves."—**Huddersfield Examiner.**

". . . Few students can have used it habitually without a growing sense of the importance of the work. As a storehouse of closely-compacted modern learning it has no rival at home or abroad."—**Literary World.**

"Like its predecessor, this volume gives the results of laborious research, unfettered by any controversial purpose; it reflects, on the whole, the spirit of a criticism which (as the editors say in the preface to Vol. I.) 'identifies the cause of religion with that of historical truth.'"—**Literature.**

"The most valuable addition of recent years to the knowledge of the Bible. The publication of such a work marks a fresh stage, not only in Biblical criticism and knowledge, but also in the development of English theology. The work is essentially an important one, especially so to students, ministers, and others."—**Liverpool Mercury.**

"The Encyclopædia, taken as a whole, maintains its high standard of critical scholarship, and is proving itself to be in science and in thoroughness a work well fitted for use in an intellectual and exacting age."—The Rev. Principal FAIRBAIRN in the **Speaker.**

ENCYCLOPÆDIA BIBLICA

VOL. IV. Q—Z.

Volume IV. completes the Work, and will contain Contributions by the following Scholars:

ISRAEL ABRAHAMS (**Tunic**, etc.).
REV. W. E. ADDIS, M.A. (**Righteousness**, etc.).
Prof. W. H. BENNETT (**Stranger and Sojourner**, etc.).
I. BENZINGER, PH.D. (**Temple**, etc.).
Prof. A. A. BEVAN (**Writing**).
Prof. F. BROWN, D.D. (**Sheba**).
F. C. BURKITT, M.A. (**Text and Versions**).
Rev. C. F. BURNEY, M.A. (**Stars**).
Prof. T. K. CHEYNE, D.D. (**Saul**, etc.).
S. A. COOK, M.A. (**Tent**, etc.).
Rev. G. A. COOKE, M.A. (**Tabor**).
A. E. COWLEY, M.A. (**Samaria, Samaritans**).
Prof. P. GARDNER, M.A. (**Quirinius**).
Prof. K. GELDNER, PH.D. (**Zoroastrianism**).
REV. E. P. GOULD (**Spirit**).
Prof. G. B. GRAY (**Theophany**, etc.).
G. F. HILL, M.A. (**Shekel**, etc.).
H. W. HOGG, M.A. (**Reuben**, etc.).
JOHANNES JEREMIAS, PH.D. (**Ritual**).
Rev. C. H. W. JOHNS, M.A. (**Shalmaneser**, etc.).
Prof. A. R. S. KENNEDY, D.D. (**Wine**, etc.).
Prof. A. C. MCGIFFERT, D.D. (**Thessalonians, Epistle**).
N. MCLEAN, M.A. (**Serpent**, etc.).
Prof. W. C. VAN MANEN, D.D. (**Rome, Church of**, etc.).
Prof. KARL MARTI, D.D. (**Year**, etc.).
Prof. JOHN MASSIE (**Satan**).
Prof. ED. MEYER (**Tyre**).
President G. F. MOORE, D.D. (**Sacrifice**, etc.).
Prof. W. M. MÜLLER (**Red Sea**, etc.).
Prof. I. J. PERITZ (**Synagogue**).
T. G. PINCHES (**Tiglath-pileser**).
Prof. J. D. PRINCE (**Scribes and Pharisees**).
Rev. Canon J. ARMITAGE ROBINSON, D.D. (**Teacher**, etc.).
Prof. N. SCHMIDT (**Son of Man**, etc.).
Prof. P. W. SCHMIEDEL, D.D. (**Simon Magus**, etc.).
A. E. SHIPLEY, M.A. (**Serpent**, etc.).
Prof. G. A. SMITH, D.D. (**Trade and Commerce**).
The late Prof. W. ROBERTSON SMITH, D.D. (**Sabbath**, etc.).
The late Prof. A. SOCIN (**Syria**).
Prof. B. STADE, D.D. (**Samuel, Books of**).
Sir W. T. THISELTON-DYER, K.C.M.G., F.R.S. (**Terebinth**, etc.).
Prof. C. H. TOY, D.D. (**Wisdom Literature**, etc.).
Prof. J. WELLHAUSEN, D.D. (**Zechariah**).
Rev. Principal O. C. WHITEHOUSE (**War**, etc.).
Prof. W. J. WOODHOUSE (**Sardis**, etc.).

A Detailed Prospectus will be sent on Application to

A. & C. BLACK, SOHO SQUARE, LONDON.

PROPRIETORS AND PUBLISHERS OF THE "ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA."